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To: Local association secretaries - for action
(5 copies)

Dear Colleague

Career Development and Staff Appraisal Procedures
for Academic and Academic Related Staff

The Joint Working Party of representatives of AUT and CVCP, with ACAS assistance, has now agreed a document setting out advice on career development and staff appraisal procedures for academic and related staff. A copy is enclosed; it is being circulated simultaneously by the CVCP to its members.

I am also enclosing some guidance on the use and interpretation of the national advice which has been prepared by our representatives on the Joint Working Party. Material on more detailed aspects of staff appraisal and on current good practice will be circulated in early January. Training sessions on appraisal for local associations are also planned.

The Joint Working Party is now turning its attention to probation procedures. I will keep you informed of developments.

Yours sincerely

DIANA WARWICK

General Secretary

Encs.

**COMMITTEE OF
VICE-CHANCELLORS
AND PRINCIPALS**

AUT

Association of University Teachers

**Career Development and Staff
Appraisal
Procedures for Academic and
Academic
Related Staff**

November 1987

CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND STAFF APPRAISAL PROCEDURES
FOR ACADEMIC AND ACADEMIC-RELATED STAFF

Introduction

1. This document has been agreed in a Joint Working Party of representatives of the Association of University Teachers (AUT) and the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals (CVCP) with assistance from the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service. It arises from the Introduction of the revised salary structure contained in the Twenty-third Report from Committee A, and advises that appraisal procedures should incorporate the points below.

Objectives

2. A career development and staff appraisal system should:
 - (a) help individual members of staff to develop their careers within the institution;
 - (b) Improve staff performance;
 - (c) Identify changes in the organisation or operation of the institution which would enable individuals to improve their performance;
 - (d) identify and develop potential for promotion;
 - (e) improve the efficiency with which the institution is managed.

Procedure

3. In order to fulfill these objectives the system should:
 - (a) apply, with suitable modifications, to all levels of academic and academic-related staff, including research and analogous staff;
 - (b) be compatible with the development of equal opportunities policies;
 - (c) operate on an annual or biennial cycle;
 - (d) encourage staff to reflect on their own performance, and to take steps to improve it;
 - (e) Involve an appropriate mixture of self-assessment, Informal interviewing and counselling. The appraisal process should be regarded as a joint professional task shared between appraiser and appraisee, with the latter involved at all stages. The views of students and others who are affected by the performance of staff should also be taken into account;

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- (f) provide for an agreed record of discussion, and of follow-up action;
- (g) provide for staff to record dissent on an otherwise jointly agreed appraisal record;
- (h) provide for a second opinion in any serious case of disagreement between appraiser and appraisee;
- (i) provide for effective follow-up action in relation to staff development needs, weaknesses in organisation, provision of resources or other matters identified at the appraisal interview. Effective, in this context, means a realistic appreciation of what can be achieved in the shorter as well as the longer run. This applies to both staff performance and to the provision of extra facilities for staff training and other forms of personal development.

Institutional arrangements

4. Arrangements should be agreed about:

- (a) who should conduct appraisals.

It is essential that appraisers have the confidence of their appraisees. For this reason, they should be experienced and responsible members of staff who have been formally recognised by the institution as appraisers and who have been properly trained for, and have sufficient time to devote to, their appraisal duties. Heads of department or section (or equivalent) will have a significant role to play in the appraisal of staff in their department, but this will not exclude the designation of other staff as recognised appraisers. In any event, the number of colleagues for whom any one appraiser is responsible should be strictly limited so that they can give the task the time and uninterrupted attention which it requires.

In exceptional circumstances appraisees should have the right to request that an alternative appraiser be appointed and. If an alternative is appointed, this should be formally agreed;

- (b) what will be appraised.

Appraisal should focus on present and future performance in the job, not on an individual's personal characteristics. Appraiser and appraisee need to agree what the job of the appraisee has involved during the period covered by the appraisal and to identify the key areas on which the appraisal should concentrate in assessing and helping to improve performance.

/(c) . . .

- (c) the content of appraisal records.

The appraisal record should consist of a description of the work undertaken by the appraisee during the period covered by the appraisal, an appraisal of performance and a statement of any agreed follow-up action. There should also be space for the appraisee to make comments and to record any dissenting views and for the record to be signed by both appraiser and appraisee. The appraisal record and forms used in the appraisal process should follow an agreed common format for all staff in the institution. It should also be agreed which documents are to be regarded as part of the appraisal process, and are to be kept on the record, as opposed to material which is personal to the person preparing it, such as notes made before or during the interview.

- (d) custody of records and initiation of follow-up action.

Appraisal interviews are intended to be frank and constructive. Appraisal records are likely to contain sensitive material. Safe keeping for such material is essential. Appraisal records should be kept only by appraisees, appraisers and heads of department. Arrangements for the implementation of follow-up action should be discussed and agreed between them. In some cases, it may be necessary to involve other relevant officers of the institution in the discussion of follow-up action because, for example, it requires special training provision. In this event the appraisee should be fully involved in the discussions in accordance with 3 (e) above.

- (e) the relation between appraisal and promotion and probation.

The AUT/CVCP advice on promotion procedures issued in October 1987 refers to the contribution of the career development and appraisal system in helping people reach the standards necessary for promotion. Appraisal records will contain evidence of progress and achievements and suitable use of this material should be made in promotion procedures. Once the career development and appraisal system is fully operational promotions committees should expect to see material from recent appraisal records. This should be done by the appraisee and appraiser producing an agreed summary of recent appraisal records, focussing particularly on those aspects of the appraisal record which provide evidence about suitability for promotion (see 2 (d) above). The summary should then be submitted via the head of department to the promotions committee, but see also paragraph 3(c) of the AUT/CVCP document on promotion procedures.

The Joint Working Party will be giving further consideration to the way in which the appraisal process might support probation procedures.

/(f) . . .

- (f) the retention of appraisal records.

The time for which these records should be kept is a matter for local agreement. Decisions on this might be deferred until some experience of running an appraisal system has been acquired.

- (g) the provision of training for all staff involved in the career development and appraisal system.

This should include both the training of appraisers and ensuring that those being appraised understand what the process will involve and how to derive the maximum benefit from it. It is recognised that the establishment of a worthwhile scheme is dependent on a willingness in institutions to devote considerable staff time, energy and other resources to its operation.

- (h) the establishment of effective staff development and training programmes, so that the needs identified by appraisal can be met.

A good appraisal system will generate increased demand for development and training opportunities. This demand is likely to cover a wide range of professional needs. Its success will be substantially dependent on the provision of extra staff time and training supported by additional financial resources.

- (i) the coordination of the system.

Arrangements should be agreed locally to ensure that appraisals are done to schedule and that agreed follow-up action is taken.

- (j) the monitoring of the system.

Local arrangements for the joint monitoring and evaluation of the career development and appraisal system should be agreed. Institutions should consider running and evaluating pilot appraisal schemes in selected departments or sections before implementing full schemes.

Future action

5. The Joint Working Party recommends that the ACT and CVCP should review these guidelines in the summer of 1989 in the light of information about the operation of schemes in institutions and with a view to the dissemination of good practice.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND STAFF APPRAISAL PROCEDURES

AUT GUIDANCE FOR LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS

Introduction

The attached national advice on career development and staff appraisal procedures for academic and academic-related staff has been agreed between the AUT and the CVCP following the 1987 salary settlement. The advice is being issued by the CVCP to all institutions represented on the Committee at the same time as AUT issues it to all local associations. The advice is the outcome of negotiations between AUT and CVCP and inevitably contains compromises between the views of the two sides.

You should now invite your institution to agree locally the formulation and implementation of a scheme of career development and staff appraisal reviews. If such a scheme already exists in your institution, you should re-examine it in the light of the attached national advice and the following guidance and, if you think your scheme could be improved, you should initiate negotiations. If you have a joint negotiating committee (or equivalent) that is the obvious forum. If you do not, negotiations should be in an ad hoc committee. It is vital to get the basis for the scheme right before its introduction and you should therefore resist any attempt to introduce schemes too quickly. In particular, you should ensure that training needs are fully met and should argue for the development and evaluation of agreed pilot schemes in selected areas before the full adoption of a scheme by the institution.

Please keep your assigned AUT official up to date with the progress of the negotiations. In particular, report immediately any reluctance by your institution to negotiate or to follow the agreed national advice so that the matter can be raised with the CVCP and ACAS. Members of the AUT Salaries and Grading Committee have been assigned to local associations to help in cases of difficulty (please see LA/3242).

The national advice provides general principles. More detail will need to be added in local negotiations and schemes will need to take account of local circumstances. Many of the overall details you should argue for are contained in LA/3249 Career Development and Staff Appraisal Reviews; Statement of AUT Policy. AUT will also be circulating examples of 'good practice' from those schemes which already exist in universities and elsewhere.

There are two important areas where the national advice is not explicit - although in each case the implication is clear. These are the areas of confidentiality and limitation of the use of appraisal records.

The argument that appraisal records should be kept confidential to the appraisee, the appraiser and the head of department and used for nothing other than agreed follow-up action, and at most a strictly limited interaction with promotion procedures, is as follows. If the appraiser and appraisee believe that any action damaging to the appraisee (for example selection for redundancy or disciplinary action) might be based on the appraisal record they will be less than frank. No appraisee will admit to failings in this situation, let alone look for them, and few appraisers will be willing to include adverse comment in the appraisal record of a colleague if the record might endanger the continued employment of that colleague. Non-confidentiality and/or punitive use of the record would therefore vitiate the agreed objectives listed in paragraph 2 of the national advice, thereby distorting and damaging the whole appraisal process.

This argument was never rebutted in the national negotiations and we were able to secure a form of words which supports our case. Paragraphs 4(d) and 4(e) of the national advice clearly imply that the appraisal records are confidential to the appraisee, the appraiser and the head of department and should be used for no purpose other than those described in 4(d) and 4(e). We strongly urge local associations to ensure that their local agreements contain these two points explicitly.

Paragraph by paragraph commentary on the national advice

Paragraph 2

Local associations should insist that the starting point in defining the objectives of career development and staff appraisal systems in universities is the development of individual potential and skills. The achieving of improvement in the efficiency with which the institution is managed (paragraph 2(e)) will primarily be through the appraisal of staff from the Vice-Chancellor down who have management functions within the institution, thus leading to the development of their management skills.

The ordering of objectives in paragraph 2 should also be borne in mind, since there may be a tendency in local negotiations for some managements to put top-down management criteria above individual development.

Paragraph 3

Points (a) to (i) should be embodied in the procedures negotiated locally. In particular, it should be ensured that staff appraisal, development and training procedures are operated in ways which support and reinforce the institutional development of equal opportunities.

The reference to research and analogous staff (paragraph 3(a)) serves to remind employers that their responsibilities to contract staff are just as important and extensive as those relating to permanent staff.

Paragraph 4

(a) who should conduct appraisals

Local associations should note 'that, although the national advice recognises that heads of department or their equivalents will play a significant role in the appraisal process for staff in their departments it is intended: (i) that a wider range of staff than heads of department should be recognised as appraisers; and (ii) that the number of staff appraised by any one appraiser should be strictly limited (we would suggest no more than eight). Local associations should use this paragraph, with its implicit recognition that appraisal is non-hierarchical, to argue for as wide a designation of appraisers as possible. The more individuals recognised as appraisers by an institution, the more likely it is that colleagues will be able to find an acceptable appraiser.

Local associations should insist that the references to the training of appraisers and the time appraisal takes are strictly adhered to. Without proper provision in these areas, schemes will not function effectively.

(b) what will be appraised

Within the jobs of both academic and academic-related staff there are large areas of discretion. That discretion is central to the professional nature of our work and local associations should not allow institutions to use the appraisal process to define or circumscribe the activities of staff. In many schemes, a checklist of activities is used as a guide to both the preparation for interview and the appraisal interview itself. Such checklists or aides-memoire exist solely to facilitate the appraisal process and must not be treated as if they were job specifications. The adoption of a common format for checklists, applicable to all academic and related staff in the institution, will help to ensure that they are used correctly.

(c) the content of appraisal records

The format for appraisal records used in staff development and appraisal systems varies considerably, but local associations should ensure: (i) that the same appraisal record form is used for all staff in the institution; and (ii) that the content of the appraisal record is limited strictly to the three elements described in paragraph 4(c) of the national advice. In particular, a clear and rigid distinction should be made between written material which forms part of the appraisal record itself, and which is to be kept on file, and other material generated during the process of appraisal which is to be disregarded, such as notes, checklists and other aides-memoire.

All three elements of the record (description of work. Appraisal of performance and follow-up action) should normally be agreed between appraisee and appraiser. Paragraphs 3(g) and 3(h) provide procedures where there is any disagreement.

(d) custody of records and initiation of the follow-up action

According to the national advice, the head of department should keep a copy of the appraisal record. In practice, this would be contrary in some cases to AUT policy (LA/3249) which holds that the record should be confidential to appraiser and appraisee. However, the AUT position is difficult to sustain unless the head of department is appraiser for all staff in the department or for none. The situation of the head of department having access to some but not all records could lead to severe problems, for- example, in relation to the head of department's role in promotion procedures. We therefore advise any local association attempting to argue that access should be limited to the appraisee and the appraiser to argue also that heads of department should not appraise staff in their own departments but be involved only in follow-up action.

As stated in the introduction above we believe it to be most important that local associations ensure that local agreements contain explicit statements that the appraisal record is confidential to the appraisee, appraiser and head of department; and also that the appraisal record should be used for no purposes other than those described in the national advice. A number of the pilot schemes already in operation are consistent with this approach. It should also be noted that the involvement of officers of the institution in follow-up action such as training does not require wider access to or wider use of the records.

(e) the relation between appraisal and promotion and probation

Local associations should ensure that local agreements do not allow a situation to arise in which appraisers can choose whether or not to submit their appraisal records in support of promotion. If this is permitted it will inevitably and rapidly place all applicants in the position of feeling that they have to submit their full appraisal records in order to avoid being automatically discounted.

The individual appraisal record, having been prepared with the object of staff development in mind, and therefore with its inevitable emphasis on areas requiring change or improvement, is not an appropriate document for consideration by promotion committees. In the absence of an explicit prohibition on submission of the full record with or without the agreement of the appraisee, we recommend you to seek the compromise contained in the national advice of an agreed summary of recent records focussing on those aspects which provide evidence of suitability for promotion. The summary should stress positive evidence in support of the case. In the event of failure to agree such a summary, the appraisee should have the right to choose whether nothing should be submitted or separate summaries by appraisee and appraiser should be submitted.

If we were to seek complete exclusion of the use of the appraisal records in promotion procedures we would have to seek a prohibition against heads of department referring in any way to appraisal in their reports and recommendations to promotion committees (see paragraph 3(d) of the national advice on promotion procedures). This prohibition would be impossible to maintain and an informal, uncontrollable link between appraisal and promotion would soon establish itself. This would be far more damaging than the use of an agreed summary.

The question of the link between appraisal and probation should be left until the issue is considered nationally.

(f) the retention of appraisal records

The objectives of the scheme make it unlikely that any useful purpose would be served by the preservation of appraisal records for longer than two years. Local associations should seek to negotiate arrangements for the periodic review by appraisees and appraisers of accumulated records and for the destruction of all copies of those which are felt to be no longer relevant or useful.

(g) the provision of training for all staff involved in the career development and appraisal system

This is an essential aspect of any scheme, in relation both to the proper training of appraisers and to the development of awareness in all staff of the factors involved in, and benefits from, appraisal. Local associations should ensure that Senates and Councils/Courts give these issues and the associated issue of resources detailed and serious attention.

(h) the establishment of effective staff development and training programmes, so that needs identified by appraisal can be met

The comments under (g) above apply with equal weight here. In particular local associations should try to ensure that the resource requirements of career development and staff appraisal are met. If the requirements for development and training identified by the appraisal process are not met appraisees and appraisers will rapidly become cynical about appraisal and the system will collapse.

It should be emphasised that the recommendations on academic staff training contained in the CVCP Code of Practice (circulated as LA/3192) have yet to be implemented in most institutions, even though they would only establish a minimal level of training provision. Good appraisal schemes will generate far more extensive training requirements than those envisaged in the Code.

(i) the co-ordination of the system

The arrangements referred to in this paragraph of the national advice should include taking steps to ensure that all appraisees and appraisers receive clear information about the practical details of the working of the appraisal system and that they understand how it relates to provision for career development and training. These matters should figure prominently in the training of appraisees and appraisers referred to in paragraph 4(g) of the national advice.

(j) the monitoring of the system

Local associations should ensure that they are fully involved in a formal process of monitoring and evaluating the operation of the appraisal system. Again, this could be done through a joint negotiating committee where one exists, or in an ad hoc committee.

Local associations should also argue strongly for the operation of an agreed system in a few pilot departments and for a full evaluation of these pilots before the career development and appraisal scheme is extended to the whole institution. All recent experience suggests that such pilot schemes are necessary to eliminate the problems inevitably thrown up when new procedures are introduced into complex organisations.

It is also important to establish joint monitoring so that information can be fed into the national monitoring and evaluation exercise referred to in paragraph 5 of the national advice.

Paragraph 5

The AUT and CVCP are committed to a review the national advice in 1989. The AUT will press that this review be conducted jointly and that it results both in the dissemination of good practice and in a joint approach to the DES for additional monies to fund the extra demands on resources which appraisal will inevitably generate.