OUR PEOPLE PRACTICES/
Staff Development:
Staff Guide
14 Aug 2017
INTRODUCTION

This document forms part of the guidance available for staff in understanding development planning and activities at The University of Kent. It draws together relevant information about how to identify development requirements, the opportunities available and the potential funding options.

This guidance is designed to give staff an 'at a glance' view of specific employment practices and it should be read in conjunction with the Staff Development Policy, which provides more detailed guidance on development opportunities.

Staff Development

The University recognises that as a member of staff you will be interested in developing your knowledge, skills, abilities and confidence in a variety of areas, to achieve your potential.

It is understood that as a staff member you are likely to have aspects of your current role that you are less experienced in, or wish to learn more about in order remain interested and engaged in your current role. You may also have aspirations of moving to other roles in the University or externally and therefore be looking to enhance your skills and knowledge in certain areas to help work towards those goals.

Development opportunities come in many forms and the university is able to offer a great selection of both informal and formal learning opportunities to our staff members.

Example development activities;

- Coaching
- Mentoring
- Internal training provision
- Accredited qualifications
- Action Learning Sets
- Job shadowing
- Secondments
- Project work
- E-Learning
- Online free learning (eg. MOOCs)
Staff Development Activities: AT A GLANCE

Discussing and Identifying Development Needs

Your development needs can be identified in many ways; as a staff member you may determine areas you would like to develop or learn more about, your manager may identify areas which could be improved or developed to aid your current or future performance as an individual or as part of the wider team or the introduction of new processes/technology/legislation may prompt the need for you to learn new skills.

The identification of these development needs will start on day one, as you begin your employee journey at the University and should be considered as part of the following processes.

Induction

Induction is the beginning of your journey, welcoming you to The University of Kent and plays an important part in supporting you to become familiar with the University, its values, strategy and vision, as well as providing all important information about your new role. As a new member of staff you will be involved in variety of Induction activities working through an Induction Checklist with your line manager or other members of your team.

Some activities will link you to other staff from across the organisation, enabling you to start making connections and network. During Induction, it is important to discuss any areas of your job role that you feel you may need support or require additional development to effectively undertake, with your manager. This will enable your manager to work with you to provide adequate support within your probation period to develop these areas to the required level for your role.

Probation (Staff Grades 1-10 Inc. Research)

If you are a newly appointed member of staff in Grades 1-10 but are not in an Academic role, you will undertake a structured Probation period over six months. This period includes completing the induction process and following a 4-Stage Probation Process, comprising of meetings with your line manager. During these meetings you should raise any questions or queries you may have and outline any areas of development you feel you may need to effectively undertake your role. These needs may be for informal or formal development activities (see pages 4-5 for more detail).

Completion of probation, including form and checklist, will result in confirmation in post.

For further detail of these processes click the relevant link – Induction or Probation

Probation (Academic Staff)

If you are newly appointed to an academic role you will be required to undertake a period of probation. The length of this period will be dependent on your experience and the level of role you are coming in to but normally at Lecturer level you will be required to undertake a three year probation period. During this period, planned induction, training and support will take place within a clear framework.

As an Academic staff member on probation, you are not usually subject to the University’s RPD/appraisal scheme, as academic probationers are allocated a Probationary Supervisor who will undertake regular performance reviews. Please click the link for full details of Academic staff probation.

Development Discussions:

Throughout your employment the University requires that you have at least one development discussion with your line manager each year. The format of these discussions will depend on the type of role you are undertaking. If you work in Professional Services or academic support roles, you will most likely have a Reflect Plan Develop (RPD) conversation. RPD is the University’s appraisal process and is an ideal format to discuss learning and development priorities, alongside more frequent 1:1 meetings. In academic roles there are a variety of ways these development discussions may occur and further detail can be found in section 6.2 of the Staff Development Policy.

The development discussion you have with your line manager should focus on supporting the delivery of agreed objectives within your role and ensuring that you are equipped to effectively reach your full potential within your team and department.
Compliance Training

All staff will be required to undertake certain compliance training outlined within the induction programme and the University is committed to providing appropriate Health and Safety, Data Protection and Equality, Diversity & Inclusivity (EDI) training to all staff.

It may be that your role also has more specific compliance training needs. Often these will be where specialist skills or knowledge, use of equipment or a regulated activity is undertaken. Where identified compliance training is required within your role, you will be made aware of this and you will be required to undertake relevant training and/or refresher training when requested.

Internal training provision

The central L&OD team provide development activities in the following areas;

- Strategic leadership and management development programmes
- Modular, one-off workshop sessions in specific topic areas which support development of managers
- One-off workshop sessions in specific skills development
- Briefing sessions related policies and processes (such as RPD)

The L&OD Calendar will outline which activities are currently available and how you should register for these.

You should discuss your attendance on any programme or workshop with your line manager and they need to agree your attendance before booking. You will need to consider what your objectives are for attending the development activity and how you will demonstrate the impact of learning once back in your role.

Some of our programmes are by nomination only and therefore if you are interested in attending one of these, it is important to discuss this with your line manager as soon as possible, so your name can be put forward at the appropriate time.

Please be aware that non-attendance at any workshop or session booked will incur a charge to your department. If you cannot attend for any reason, please discuss this with your line manager and get them to contact ldev@kent.ac.uk so we can agree your cancellation well before the course date.

Accredited courses

If you identify with your line manager that you could benefit from undertaking an accredited training course - an activity which provides you with a recognised qualification at the end, which is portable. Your school/department will need to assess this request alongside development needs from other staff members and prioritise, within available budgets which can be approved at any given time.

You may be asked to contribute to the costs of accredited training or pay for other associated costs (travel expenses, books/resources) and you may be asked to attend workshops or study in your own time. Principles around these aspects can be found in the section 7 of the policy.

If you are receiving funding from the University for an Accredited Course, you will be asked to sign a Learning Agreement confirming the requirement to repay a proportion of the funding you have received, if you leave the organisation within two years of completing your qualification.

If the accredited training is a contractual or compliance requirement (see above), you will not be required to sign a Learning Agreement or repay funding on leaving the University.
How will my development be funded?

Each school/department is asked to consider required development within their planning cycles and set in place funding, however they will only have finite resources to fund development opportunities for all their staff members and where compliance training is required, this will need to be prioritised. It is therefore recognised that schools/departments may need financial support to help cover costs for non-compliance development requests. The University has the Central Development Fund (CDF) in place to assist with support and all schools/departments are able to apply to this limited fund each financial year.

Once a development need has been identified for you, your line manager will need to feed the requirement in to the wider school/department Staff Development Contact (section 5.9 of policy). It is therefore important for you to ensure that you discuss any development needs with your line manager in detail. Decisions and priorities for allocation to development activities will be made by the Head of School/Department in line with current strategic and operational objectives.

If applicable your line manager may need to discuss with you the requirement for you to commit funds for certain types of development opportunities. Please consider this when discussing your needs and be ready to identify how much you can reasonably commit. If your school/department is unable to provide/secure sufficient funding for you to undertake the development opportunity, you should discuss alternative informal methods of meeting the learning objectives where possible with your line manager.

As a staff member;

You should consider and be prepared to discuss with your line manager the following:

- What the objective is to undertaking the development opportunity?
- How will the learning activity positively impact the work you currently do or add value to your school/department, now or in the future?
- What practical effects could undertaking the development opportunity have and how would you suggest these are countered (for example; need for time away from the office or increased requirement for colleagues to cover work in your absence)
- If you are willing to meet some of the costs of the opportunity (mainly for accredited opportunities or qualifications) and if so, how much you could contribute
- The requirement to sign a learning agreement to allow for repayment of funding should you leave the University

Alternative Development Options

Job shadowing

This informal development activity can be very beneficial in giving you practical knowledge and experience in a new area. Job Shadowing a colleague from another school/department or another team in your department helps to increase understanding of processes, explore other roles and work areas, facilitate the breaking down of internal barriers across the organisation and improve communication.

Secondments

Similarly to Job Shadowing, secondments (where a member of staff works in another role or team for a fixed period of time) can be an excellent way for you to develop new skills and expand knowledge. The University has an Internal Secondment policy and procedure which will help you understand the framework for undertaking a secondment from your current role, into another. You should always discuss your objectives for undertaking the secondment with your line manager and how your anticipated learning goals would benefit your role, once you return after secondment. It should be noted that it is not always possible
for your department to release you to undertake a secondment.

**Project Involvement**

Projects are another way for you to develop current skills, get involved in new areas of work, refine skills or specialise in certain areas of work.

Project work may become available as internal secondment opportunities advertised on the University website (see above) or within your own school/department/team. It is important during development discussions to outline any areas of interest and remain aware of what projects are staring up that might meet your development current needs.

**Mentoring**

Mentoring can be a hugely beneficial way for you to gain insight and advice from a more experienced member of staff.

Mentoring relationships provide you with a truly individual way to address many development needs.

Our [Mentoring webpage](#) will give you full information about what mentoring is and how to get involved.

Get involved in Mentoring;

- Mentoring is a mutually beneficial, supportive relationship
- A member of staff more experienced in a particular area, activity or task supports another member of staff
- Anyone can become involved in mentoring as either a mentor or mentee
- It can motivate, support and help both individuals to build confidence
- [KEW-Net](#) is a self-managed, professional mentoring and networking platform which allows mentees to find a suitable mentor

**Coaching**

Similarly to mentoring, coaching can be a valuable way for you to develop confidence and problem solve, especially in relation to particular situations, challenges or at key stages in your career. The University does have a number of trained coaches who may be able to undertake a period of coaching with you, dependant on the requirements and their workloads. Alternatively, L&OD are able to advise on engaging with external coaches.

If you are interested in undertaking any form of development opportunity, always speak to your line manager about your thoughts in the first instance. Be prepared with ideas and potential options available to meet your development need and ensure that you are clear about what your goals or objectives are, in undertaking the development activity.
SUMMARY: STEP BY STEP PROCESS

What development would you like to undertake?

Why do you need this?

How can this need be met? Consider all available options

Discuss your request with your line manager

Does your line manager support this development need?

Yes

Discuss and review with your line manager what alternative development may be more appropriate/available

No

If the activity relates to an informal learning activity (e.g., job shadowing or mentoring) you will need to discuss with your line manager to arrange this

If the activity relates to an internal provision you will need to follow the appropriate, outlined booking procedure

If the activity relates to an accredited course, you will need to:

Agree your potential contribution to costs

Discuss the requirement for and sign a learning Agreement

Discuss & agree any required time off to study

Your Line manager will forward your request to be considered alongside all other departmental requests

Can your School/Department support the opportunity at this time?

Yes

Work with your line manager to register and make payment for the activity following your

No
CONTACT DETAILS

For further information about Staff Development opportunities and the Staff Development Policy, please visit the Learning and Organisational Development website.

Alternatively you can contact your designated L&OD representative, details of whom are available on the Who to Contact section of the HR website.