Learning & Development Policy

1. Policy statement

People are the key to achieving the University's Strategic Plan and other stated priorities: the skills and knowledge of the University's people are core to achieving the goal of providing high quality education, training and research and improving student satisfaction.

The University is committed to the ongoing continuing professional development of the skills and knowledge of all staff, irrespective of their working hours or contract type. All staff are expected to have a personal development plan which they review annually with their manager. This will be made up of a programme of activity to support the continuing professional development of the staff member based on the needs and priorities of the job and the University. It may also include attendance on training courses or at conferences where appropriate.

It is the policy of the University to:

- Support staff to acquire knowledge and skills which will allow them to fulfil their job responsibilities more effectively;
- Help staff to develop skills and/or gain qualifications which contribute to the achievement of agreed University goals;
- Support the development of teams and effective team working;
- Facilitate the effective assimilation of organisational change in the University, school, college or department;
- Ensure that all learning and development activity is evaluated and the impact monitored to ensure the intended outcomes are realised.

This policy explains the varying responsibilities of staff and managers, the process for identifying and accessing learning and development activity, and how the return on the University's investment will be secured.

2. Identifying learning and development needs

Learning and development embraces all aspects of professional development and training for all employees within the University of West London. It includes any learning opportunity or activity which:

- Enhances the ability of individuals and teams to deliver school, college and departmental service plans;
- Enables employees to develop new skills for their current or future roles so that they can respond positively to change;
- Improves the quality of teaching, research and consultancy and the services that support this.

All employees are expected to participate in a programme of learning and development activity that improves their effectiveness and efficiency. In order to meet institutional priorities and legal responsibilities, attendance or completion of specific learning and development activity will be required of all staff.

Individual learning and development needs are identified in several ways:

- As part of the programme of induction;
- Through the performance review and development scheme (appraisal) and probationary review;
- From institutional development needs identified in the University's Strategic Plan and in the University's People Strategy;
- From operational development needs identified through school and department plans as part of the annual business planning cycle.

Planning processes retain flexibility for staff and managers to agree additional development needs as they become necessary.

3.   Induction

All new starters will be invited to a University induction event to welcome them to the University and to give them an overview of the University and its strategic priorities. The event includes:

- An overview of the University's purpose and current priorities within the context of issues facing higher education in general;
- Important health and safety messages;
- Information about our diversity and equality policies;
- Other core messages about the University as a whole.

The most important part of any induction programme is the induction carried out locally by managers and colleagues. Local induction is a key factor in helping staff fit into the University and to perform most effectively. The induction of a specific employee is the line manager's responsibility. To support this, a local induction guide and checklist are provided for all managers and outlines all the elements of good practice on the following link, New staff welcome.

A well-planned and executed induction should:

- Ensure new members of staff feel welcome;
- Provide an introduction to the University;
- Give an insight into the work of key departments and staff across the University;
- Provide essential background information to assist new members of staff with their own work;
- Clarify job expectations and initial objectives.

The manager's role is to ensure induction meets these requirements so that every new member of staff has a strong start in their new job and feels part of their team as soon as possible.

The University's Probation Policy, provides an outline of the supervision process and how the performance of new staff members should be managed during the probationary period to ensure that they are supported to become effective in their role at the earliest opportunity. It is the responsibility of the line manager to ensure that any initial learning and development activity is carefully planned and reviewed to support effective induction.

In particular all new staff are expected to complete a mandatory health and safety briefing and compliance related e-learning (currently anti-bribery and corruption, equality and diversity, information security and general data protection regulation) during their probationary period. This is contained in the induction checklist.

4.   Performance Review and Development Scheme

The Performance Review and Development Scheme (Appraisal Guide) is the foundation for managing and reviewing performance and development in role. All staff will have an appraisal between April and August of each academic year. The process is intended to achieve the following:

- A review of performance over the past academic year, with feedback regarding performance and agreement of any improvement actions;
- Agreement of performance objectives for the next year based on organisational priorities and need;
- A review of the personal development plan along with a review of the impact on performance of any training and development activity undertaken;
- Agreement of the personal development plan for each member of staff for the next year.

Progressing the personal development plan is the responsibility of the member of staff supported by the line manager.

5.   Academic staff

It is the responsibility of individual academic staff to keep their curriculum vitae up to date and at least once a year, as part of the annual appraisal process, to submit the latest iteration to Human Resources.

It is a University requirement that all new lecturers who do not have a recognised teaching qualification complete the PG certificate in teaching and learning within the first three years of their employment (i.e. to enrol on the course within twenty-four months of taking up their post).

The PG Certificate in Academic Practice has been approved by the Nursing Midwifery Council (NMC). It is a NMC requirement that all nursing and midwifery lecturers undertake an approved teacher's programme to enable them to register with them as an approved lecturer.

6.   Development solutions

The University aims to assist every member of staff to develop to their full potential in the work that they undertake within the University. Actions to progress identified learning and development needs can be achieved through a variety of means, including:

- Internal training events (UWL courses & staff development courses)
- Peer observation
- Individuals learning through their work (on the job training) which may be assisted by coaching or mentoring
- Attending external course or conferences
- Consultancy work or research
- Employees enrolling on programmes leading to an NVQ (National Vocational Qualifications) or university /college award
- Project work
- Distance or blended learning.

Managers and members of staff will need to consider which are most suitable and practicable in meeting a specific development need. Advice may be sought from the HR Partner or the Performance and Development Advisor.

Learning and development resources and opportunities are offered both centrally by different departments – for example by Human Resources, Health and Safety, Library Services, Registry

Services, Academic Quality and Standards office (AQSO), the ExPERT Academy and the Graduate School - and locally via the schools and departments.

A CPD Guide is available for academic staff, matching development activity available within the University to the Academic Employment Framework, so that academic staff and their managers can plan their development activity to support desired progression in role.

The provider is responsible for ensuring an accurate attendance list is forwarded to the Performance and Development Advisor so that there is a central record of any formal learning and development activity undertaken.

7.   Communicating development opportunities

Learning and development opportunities will be communicated through managers but also presented through the University's Insider newsletter and will be available on the Human Resources or the ExPERT Academy portal which can be accessed through the UWL intranet.

To enable the University to respond to employees needs quickly and to offer as varied a programme as possible, training will also be arranged as required during the year.

8.   Applying for funding for external courses, conferences, and further / higher educational qualifications

When choosing appropriate learning and development activities the most cost-effective methods should be considered, utilising internal resources and expertise wherever possible.

Funding for formal learning and development activity comes from a central budget that is managed by Human Resources.

To gain approval for any learning and development funding, inside or outside of the performance review process, the following criteria MUST be met:

- Staff are employed on a permanent or sessional contract;
- The line managers agree that attendance on the programme is relevant to the needs of the individual, the school/department and the University;
- An agreement on how the knowledge and skills will be used to improve the performance of the member of staff and how they will be shared with the department/school/University more widely;
- For all external courses, the online form (SD1) is completed by the member of staff and sent to the line manager for initial agreement and to the Head of School or Department for final authorisation.
- For all conferences and further/higher education courses of study, the online form (SD1) is completed by the member of staff and sent to the Head of School or Department for initial agreement and to the line VCE member for final approval.

The online application must be submitted to the authorising manager, as above with sufficient notice. Courses or conferences will not be booked until all authorisations have been received.

Funding will not be granted retrospectively and forms cannot be generated after the event date.

In the interests of fairness and equity, the authorising manager will consider previous support given and the extent to which the University has benefitted from prior learning, before authorising new requests.

Departments/schools/colleges may be charged £100 or the cost of the conference/course, where staff have, for no valid reason, failed to attend internal or external training, study days, conferences etc.

Training requests will be judged on merit and funding agreed according to University need, with due regard to the overall cost and anticipated benefit for the University. As a condition of funding, staff will be expected to share new skills and knowledge with colleagues.

9.   University courses/ qualifications

Staff completing external or internal undergraduate, post graduate courses will be asked to reimburse the University if they leave the employment of the University either during or within 1 year of the completion of the course or programme of study.

PhD / doctorate course requests will be supported if they fulfill the required criteria for entry through the Graduate School selection process. Candidates who do not make sufficient progress on PhD courses in a timely manner will be subject to probation periods, and eventually withdrawn where lack of progress would indicate non-completion within the authorised period of registration. Candidates will not be supported to study for a PhD outside of UWL, unless there are exceptional circumstances that are approved by VCE in advance.

Candidates who complete a University funded PhD successfully will be expected to continue to work with the University for a period of 3 years. Should staff leave, a sliding scale for re-imbursement of fees will apply as follows:

- Staff leaving within a year of PhD completion, 100% of the PhD fees
- Staff leaving within two years of PhD completion, 75% of the PhD fees
- Staff leaving within three years of PhD completion, 50% of the PhD fees

For certificate, degree courses or PhDs, funding is guaranteed for only one academic year. Subsequent funding must be applied for on a new form at the beginning of the next financial year. The Head of School or Department and line VCE member must review individual progress before authorising further support.

Staff will receive a letter outlining the terms of any funding agreement in writing.

10.   Attendance at conferences

Funding for staff to attend conferences is provided on the premise that attendance enables staff members to update their knowledge, get acquainted with sector developments and to cascade back to the relevant teams. Staff attending conferences are expected to share the outcomes through seminars, short reports, or meetings to discuss changes of practice within the team, within one month of the conference date.

Academic staff may additionally attend conferences for other reasons such as delivery of a paper as part of their ongoing research or professional development or to develop new ideas for course/curriculum development.

In agreeing such attendance, the Head of School or Department and the line VCE member will agree the timetable for the delivery of required outputs.

-   Presenting papers at research conferences.

Academic staff may additionally attend academic conferences which constitute a platform for academics to get recognised, and to test their research in order to advance their thinking and polish

the way they present a research argument. Attendance at conferences should therefore lead to publications; furthermore research presented at conferences should not be repeatedly rehearsed at different conferences.

Academic conference attendance funding is available to all academic staff making an approved and refereed paper contribution to a conference.

Applicants must provide evidence that:

- their paper has been accepted by the conference committee;
- their abstract was refereed, and that the conference publishes proceedings;
- publication outlets are consistent with those agreed during appraisal and must be 2* and above.

Subsequent iterations of the same presentation will not be funded. In the case of collective research, only one presenter will receive funding.

- Conference Fees

Conference and accommodation fees will be funded by the individual in the first instance after approval by Head of School or College and the appropriate VCE member.

Conference and accommodation fees will then be reimbursed through MyView expenses after submission of evidence that a paper has been sent for publication in a 2*or above journal. Publication outlets should be consistent with those agreed at initial application.

The applicant will submit a paper for publication within 12 months of the conference and will organise a seminar within the School/College (to include colleagues, post-graduate and PhD students) on the topic of the conference presentation.

- Travel

All travel will be purchased through the University agent [Ian Allan Travel](#) and the cost for this will be borne by the school or college.

To apply for funding staff should use the [Research Conference Funding process](#).

11. Study leave

The University recognises that circumstances and types of study vary. Therefore rather than being prescriptive on the exact amount of study leave available, each case should be assessed on its own merits and the following factors should be considered:

- Is the course of study work related, i.e. is the qualification essential for the employee to carry out their duties?
- Has it been identified as a development requirement in the employee's Performance Review and Development?
- Is the course of study aspirational e.g. likely to benefit the employee in their professional development?
- What are the time commitments of the course? Consideration should be given to the number of hours recommended for study.

If merited, the Head of School/College/Department and line VCE member should consider

- Examination requirements. Leave may be granted to sit approved examinations.
- Preparation and revision. Time off granted to prepare for exams.

As a guide, an employee studying for professional qualifications would be granted up to a maximum

of 5 days study leave per year depending on operational requirements of the employee's job.

These guidelines inform employees and managers of what they can reasonably expect relating to Study Leave and provides assistance to the decision making process.

Any employee who is requesting study leave should do so giving at least four weeks' notice. Leave will be granted subject to agreement in advance by the head of school/director of service and is subject to operational requirements.

Any leave granted must be recorded on the employee's MyView record.

11.   Monitoring and evaluating the impact of learning and development activity

All learning and development activities will be evaluated to ensure a return on the investment of the University.

The Human Resources department and other providers of in-house staff development activities are responsible for evaluating the quality and effectiveness of development activities provided.

Those responsible for managing staff must, together with the staff member participating in learning and development activities, evaluate the extent to which development undertaken has achieved the intended objectives, and where necessary agree appropriate next steps with the staff member. This can be done at any time or through the performance review scheme.

The HR department provide the Heads of School/Department a list of a formal training and development activity delivered during that year. Heads will be required to provide a short annual report to the Director of Human Resource and Organisational Development, identifying the impact of any development activity on individual, team and School/Department performance.

As part of the HR annual report, the HR department report on formal training and development activity and spend during the previous academic year. An annual report of activity will also be made available to the Vice Chancellor's Executive.

Roles and responsibilities

12.1   Managers

Managers with line management responsibilities will be given appropriate development and support to enable them to manage effectively. Each manager will carry out an appraisal using the Performance Review and Development Scheme with his/her staff annually. As part of their discussion the staff member and manager should identify any developmental needs as they arise and agree how they will be met.

Managers should ensure that developmental needs of employees working on short-term contracts or part-time basis are addressed on an equitable basis, supporting the developmental needs of all employees.

It is a key performance indicator that all staff will receive an annual appraisal which includes a development plan. As part of the appraisal process, managers are expected to:

- Provide constructive feedback on past performance;
- Agree an action plan with realistic SMART objectives, with commitment to its review at least once during the year;
- Generate a development plan which benefits the school or department and individual; and offer support for the individual to meet agreed objectives and development activities;
- Undertake a mid-year review of objectives and the development plan.

Appraisers should expect to update their line manager at least twice a year on the performance and development to agreed objectives and standards of all staff.

Managers are expected to:

- Identify staff development needs to meet individual, team, school, college, department and University objectives;
- Undertake a pre and post development activity discussion to agree and record the aims and impact/benefits of the development respectively;
- Encourage their staff to identify learning and development needs and consider all requests in light of team and area priorities and budgetary constraints. There may be occasions when learning and development activity is postponed or refused as a result.
- Make all employees aware of learning and development opportunities open to them, select employees for training and brief them.
- Ensure required e learning courses are completed by all staff. These are currently:
  - Data protection;
  - Anti-bribery and corruption;
  - Diversity in the workplace;
  - Information security and General data protection regulation (GDPR).
- Ensure that those who are trained or attend conferences have clear, relevant objectives and share their learning with others wherever possible and appropriate.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of training events in relation to service and individual objectives.

12.2   Individual Staff

Members of staff are expected to be proactive in identifying their own development needs to support them in their role or to enable them to develop their roles.

Staff are required to keep up to date with the needs of their job and to take personal responsibility for progressing their personal development plan.

Individuals must attend training when arranged. Failure to attend will cost Schools, Colleges and Departments a fee of £100.00

They are expected to fully participate in the Performance Review and Development Scheme and to review with their managers the impact of any development activity.

Staff with the agreement of their Head of School or Department should choose the most cost-effective methods, when selecting formal staff development activities utilising existing mechanisms, resources and expertise wherever possible.

Staff are expected to take part in pre- and post- development activity discussion with their manager, attend development activities and complete all evaluations that take place at appropriate points as required by the University.

12.3   Heads of Schools and Departments

The Heads of School/Department should identify as part of their plans the development needs of their staff and monitor the Performance Review and Development Scheme.

It is the responsibility of Heads of School, College Deans and Heads of Professional Services to:

- Ensure all their staff are aware of local learning and development arrangements for identifying learning needs and seeking approval for learning events;

- Ensure the timely authorisation through the learning and development authorisation process and online of any funding applications from their School or Department in line with the criteria identified in section 8 of this policy;
- Produce a learning and development plan which identifies staff learning & development needs, priorities and budgetary provision as part of their Business Plan. This could be tabled in a senior management team meeting. The learning and development plan should be communicated to managers in the College, School or Service.
- Encourage their staff to record any additional ad hoc, internal and external learning and development activity (e.g. conferences) - that are not booked through HR - onto their personal learning and development plan and MyView.
- Scan the environment to analyse and evaluate internal conditions and external factors that affect the organisation and their area and thus ensure staff are adequately developed to cope with a changing landscape.
- To include targets for PG Certs/ HEA fellowships and PhD targets in School/Department plans in discussion with HR Partners.
- Provide an annual report to the Director of HR and Organisational Development for inclusion in the annual training report which will be presented to the Vice Chancellor's Executive.

13. Equality of opportunity

Access to learning and development activity will be given to all employees regardless of their ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, disability, age, employment grade, part-time status or any other prejudicial factor.

Specific equality and diversity issues will be considered for each course and where possible the University will offer a flexible approach to meeting any particular need.

Staff will be invited to identify any particular requirements they may have to enable them to participate fully in all staff development events offered, e.g. materials in alternative formats, sign language interpreters, ergonomic seating.

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