

# Appraisal - Frequently Asked Questions

## What is an appraisal?

An appraisal is an opportunity for a staff member and a line manager/supervisor to meet and reflect on the preceding year and plan for the year ahead. It is:

- a joint review of performance and development;
- an opportunity to recognise achievements;
- an agreement of objectives for the period ahead;
- an identification of development needed and support to achieve the agreed objective (including priority, measures of success and timescales).

## When does appraisal take place?

The appraisal cycle will start the week commencing 22<sup>nd</sup> May and ends 29<sup>th</sup> September. This means that all appraisal meetings need to be completed, written up and submitted on Horizon Talent by the end of September. Appraisal meetings take place once a year and objectives agreed at appraisal should be reviewed throughout the year in regular one to one sessions.

## When am I eligible for an appraisal?

Staff on probation are supported by the university's [probation policy and procedure](#). Only when an employee has completed probation successfully, will they be eligible for an appraisal. At this point they will be given access to **Horizon Talent - Performance** for undertaking an appraisal.

If an existing employee moves to a new role, they will not be expected to complete another probation period, however their outgoing and incumbent line managers should manage the transition period with the employee. Both line managers should agree a joint rating for the overall performance if the employee has undertaken two or more roles in the appraisal year. Feedback can be gathered by the participant manager function, for details see - **who is my appraiser**.

The new line manager then has the responsibility for setting the performance and development objectives. During the early stages of a new role there should be frequent one to ones and suitable objectives and development opportunities recorded as **Goals** (in Horizon) to allow the employee to develop their competence in the first year and any performance concerns should be addressed through the [Managing Performance Policy and Procedure](#).

## How should I prepare for my appraisal?

Information on how to prepare and have a successful appraisal is provided in our document: [Effective appraisals – supporting the university strategy 2030](#).

This covers SMART objectives, university values to support appraisals, developing yourself and your staff, applying ratings consistently and fairly, and receiving and giving feedback.

## How can I incorporate wellbeing during the appraisal year?

Consider what makes you feel positive and you enjoy doing, and then try to incorporate this activity as part of how you work. Activities can be very simple and may include tension reducing actions such as breathing exercises and taking walks. The [five steps to wellbeing](#) can provide further information on what keeps you well and can be a good starting point for developing ideas which can be discussed as part of team meetings and 1-1's (including appraisal) and used to support you and your colleagues.

## How can I use a wellness plan to support my staff members' mental health and wellbeing during appraisal?

MIND have produced a [wellness plan](#) to help support mental health at work. Use the wellness plan to support a guided conversation to consider how wellbeing can be incorporated more broadly into objective planning. Visit the university's wellbeing hub for further information and let staff know they can speak to a wellbeing champion.

## What happens if I cannot access Horizon Talent, including the Career or Performance sections?

If you experience any issue with Horizon or any questions specifically relating to appraisals, please email the IT Service Desk [ITServiceDesk@gre.ac.uk](mailto:ITServiceDesk@gre.ac.uk)

## Can I view my previous appraisal in the Horizon Talent system?

Yes. Your previous appraisal will be visible within the Horizon Talent system in **Career and Performance>Performance** and the relevant **Review Period**. The goals for the previous year will automatically appear in the appraisal for the current year.

The last two appraisals that were completed in the previous system can be viewed and are downloadable as PDFS in Horizon Talent under **Me** then by clicking on **Documents Records**. Within this, click on the **spectacle icon**, then download your previous appraisal.

## Can people who do not have a university username and password use the online appraisal system?

No. Only university employees can access Horizon.

If a staff member has been externally seconded, the host organisation will be responsible for carrying out the appraisal. The host organisation can provide the university line manager with a hard copy of the appraisal and the employee can attach this to their **Documents** under **Me** on Horizon.

### **What should I do if I am a manager who is still on probation and need to carry out appraisals for staff who report to me?**

Staff on probation do not have an appraisal. However, as a manager on probation you will need to carry out an appraisal for staff who report to you. To enable you to carry out the appraisal please email [ITServiceDesk@gre.ac.uk](mailto:ITServiceDesk@gre.ac.uk). Please note that where possible, it is good practice for appraisals to be cascaded from senior managers so that objectives can be properly aligned across teams and staff members.

### **Who is my appraiser?**

The appraiser is your immediate line manager, but if another manager has taken a leading role in supporting your work (referred to as a 'participant manager' within Horizon Talent), they can provide feedback during appraisal. To do this, once agreed with your line manager, you can request that the participant manager completes your appraisal feedback within the system. To do so, locate the participant manager's name in the field provided, clicking on search and selecting them from the list. However, your immediate line manager will need to record your rating.

**University line managers are ultimately responsible for completing appraisals (and applying a rating) on Horizon Talent.**

### **Do I need to record my career pathway within Horizon Talent?**

Academic staff must select an appropriate Career Pathway. This can be done within the Career and Performance section of Horizon Talent. Click on **Me>Career and Performance>Career Development>Career Preferences>Career Pathway (Academic Staff Only)**.

Information on the career pathways can be found here <https://www.gre.ac.uk/hr/academic-framework>

### **Can I delete objectives?**

If you have drafted an objective, you can delete it by clicking on **action** and choosing **delete**. Because Horizon is an integrated system, it means that when you share information with your line manager, you will not be able to delete information unless you both delete it. If an objective could not be achieved due to extenuating circumstances you can disregard this information during your assessment. If the objective will need to be postponed and completed at a later date, it can be extended via the action function.

## What are the ratings for performance?

### **A\* - Significantly exceeds performance standards**

Overall performance is consistently and significantly above the expectations of the role/post. Individual has made progress beyond their ambitious objectives. They support others to achieve success in terms of university impact. The individual exemplifies the university values.

### **A- Exceeds performance standards**

Overall performance is above the expectations of the role/post. Individual achieves outcomes beyond the scope of their objectives. Assessment recognises the higher degree of effort in meeting ambitious or developmental objectives which support the university's impact. The role holder demonstrates the university values and influences others with demonstrating these.

### **B - Achieves performance standards**

Overall performance meets the expectations of the role/post. Assessment allows flexibility to accommodate those instances where the staff member is deemed competent in their work area and has achieved the most critical objectives but may not have been able to achieve the more ambitious ones. The individual demonstrates the university values.

### **C - Areas of improvement needed to meet performance standard**

Overall performance is not meeting the expectations of the role/post and is having an impact on the work of others. The performance at this level shows the individual partially met but did not consistently achieve the objectives, including one or more deemed critical. Not all the university values are demonstrated. Performance assessment should only be awarded where additional support provided indicates the individual still needs to improve, and without this there will be a need to commence the informal stage of the capability procedure.

### **D - Significantly below performance standards**

Overall performance is consistently and significantly failing to meet expectations of the position. Performance at this level shows the jobholder clearly did not meet their objectives. There is little demonstration of our values. Assessment should only be awarded where the formal stage of the capability procedure will need to commence.

Note 1: Where circumstances outside the control of the staff member have affected achievement of an objective, that objective should be disregarded for the purposes of the assessment.

Note 2: Ratings should not be used for rewarding members of staff for working longer hours than contracted or for taking on work at a higher grade.

## What happens if I have more than one appraiser?

Systems Administrators are able to issue two appraisals if you have two line managers. To request this you should email: [ITServiceDesk@gre.ac.uk](mailto:ITServiceDesk@gre.ac.uk)

### Who sets the date for the appraisal meeting?

The timing and location of the meeting should be agreed “offline”; you don’t need to record this on the system.

### Can I print my appraisal?

Yes, within Horizon Talent under performance click on **print** at the top of the page, which takes you to a print friendly version of your appraisal.

### How do I exit the online appraisal?

When exiting the online appraisal form, if you don’t want to share the form with your appraiser/appraisee - click on **Save and Close** and then **Logout**.

### Is there an area within the appraisal system where I can record 1 to 1 meetings?

Yes, there are 1-1 check-in documents in Horizon within performance. These enable you to update your progress against your objectives.

### What happens after the appraisal meeting?

The appraiser and appraisee both need to complete the final steps within Horizon Talent and submit the appraisal.

### How can I view the development staff have undertaken during the previous year?

Within Horizon click on **My Team**, then **Learning**, click on the **Person Name** field and type the relevant name. For **Enrollment Date Type**, click on **Completed Date** and the relevant **Date Range**. A list of development that the staff member has completed within the date range specified will appear.

### How do I record my membership to a Staff Network or Community within Horizon?

Membership a Staff Network or Community can be recorded within the Careers and Performance section of Horizon. Click on **Career and Performance>Skills and Qualifications>Memberships>Affiliation or Professional Body** to submit your membership to external professional bodies and internal staff network/communities. Under **Staff Network/Group** you can select with Staff Network or Community you are part of.

### How do I meet staff members’ development needs?

**Coaching** is one of the many effective learning and development tools used in organisations today. It is a form of paired one-to-one support that enables individuals to meet stated goals and objectives.

**Feedback.** Actively seeking feedback from a range of people that you work with - including your line manager, stakeholders, peers, students and partners - can

help you identify any development needs and opportunities to try new ways of working.

**Networking** is an activity by which people can connect through forums and online platforms such as LinkedIn and Twitter. These forums enable you to share information, form relationships and to recognize, create, or act upon opportunities. Networks can also support mentoring and can open up job-shadowing opportunities.

**Job-shadowing** is learning by observation and can be applied within and across areas of the University.

**Mentoring** is a powerful personal development and empowerment tool. It is a partnership between two people (mentor and mentee) normally working in a similar field or sharing similar experiences.

**On-the-job training** – this is one you most likely experience when you are new to a role and have a list of skills and knowledge you need to acquire.

### **What happens if I'm not happy with my appraisal?**

The more prepared you are for appraisal, the more likely it is that you will feel satisfied with the outcomes. Keep records of your achievements as well as the challenges you have faced in the year. Be ready to discuss how to overcome barriers to achieving your objectives, how to make improvements going forward and what support you may need to help you.

Completing your appraisal means that your appraisal has taken place. You can document within Horizon Talent your comments about your appraisal.

### **What support is available for me?**

Information on support available is set out on the HR [appraisal webpages](#). If you experience an issue with accessing Horizon Talent you should email [ITServiceDesk@gre.ac.uk](mailto:ITServiceDesk@gre.ac.uk)