

APPRAISAL OF RESEARCH ASSISTANTS AND ASSOCIATE SCIENTISTS

[TUTOR'S NOTES.

The text following shows an example of an appraisal process against which the graduate employee is measured during the first years of their employment as a bioscientist in a large company. It is aligned to the job description for the post and to the interview process through which the employee was appointed. Appraisal would take place each year and would be both developmental (to identify areas where training could improve or extend performance) and judgmental (as bonus and progression are linked to the appraisal process).

Initially the appraisal process would proceed from the descriptors set out below which are generic to bioscientists entering the company. In following years, more detailed items, specific to the actual job and the current work in progress, would be added to and built on the descriptors below and achievement of these more specific targets would also be monitored.

The performance appraisal would start with the preparation of a self-appraisal paper covering the areas below and identifying strengths and weaknesses which would be discussed with the supervisor. Development areas would be identified, objectives for next year agreed and strategies to deliver these developmental needs would be agreed.

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USE BY TUTORS AND STUDENTS

This document can be used in several ways either as it stands or after editing by tutors to provide local emphasis in particular areas.

- 1. Tutors and their course teams may wish to consider to what extent their course enables graduates to score highly in the appraisal outlined and then to see how the course might be modified to improve the outcome.*
- 2. Tutors might wish to present to students the appraisal process so students can see the particular knowledge, skills and attributes valued by employers. This can be done in a whole class context as a presentation.*
- 3. Tutors might wish to present the appraisal process to students in small groups and to encourage them to discuss the meaning of each item, the extent to which the student believes they would score highly and to identify the parts of the course which deal with each item.*
- 4. Students can be provided with the document formed as an achievement matrix in their course handout material or progress files. They can be asked to fill in where on the course each item is dealt with and to reflect on the extent to which they would score highly on the different items.*
- 5. Students can be grouped in pairs and asked to act one as appraisee and the other as appraiser (and then swap over) to carry out the appraisal process. This would need to be preceded by some discussion on and training in appraisal.*
- 6. It is possible to use a tutorial session for the student tutorial group to use the appraisal papers to collectively appraise the TUTOR. This again needs to be preceded by some training in appraisal generally but is good preparation for (5) above].*

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Appraisal is used **formatively** to help develop employees develop their capabilities and also to input to promotion and progression processes within the company. Appraisal is tailored to the individual objectives of each worker and in detail therefore is specific to the individual in post. However, certain generic aspects of appraisal apply to all those employed in this type of posts.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- 1. Scientific Impact and effectiveness in relationship to job description*

- Productive worker who generates high quality results, in a timely manner within area of work following agreed plan and any agreed modifications.
- Has good judgement and shows ability to identify problems. Contributes to sound practical/scientific judgements and choices.
- Is capable of independent laboratory work and also contributes to decision making and experimental design in conjunction with supervisor.
- Able to effectively analyse and interpret experimental data
- Has information retrieval skills, knowledge and awareness of literature. Is able to mine for information.
- Shows ability to carry out an increasing range of laboratory procedures.

2. *Communication*

- Is awareness of position and relationships of own work to the rest of the project group.
- Is awareness of the work of others within the project group.
- Takes initiative to proactively communicate progress and issues to Supervisor and project group.
- Effective in the use of a variety of communication methods.
- Able to interact effectively at all required levels
- Able to influence others to affect direction of travel and achieve desired outcomes

3. *Documentation*

- Generates personal contribution to documentation with limited number of iterations and in a timely manner
- Documentation is 'fit for purpose', relevant and valid.

4. *Safety*

- Ensures own work and work of reportees (if appropriate) carried out safely – regularly shares good practice

5. *Thinking and understanding*

- Is able to apply knowledge to problems and develop and apply problem solving methods to produce effective and realistic solutions.

6. *Organising and implementing*

- Is aligned with company and project goals
- Is committed to achieving identified outcomes within time envelope required

7. *Personal attributes*

- Has insight into own qualities, strengths and weaknesses
- Is orientated towards life-long-learning and self development