



Section 1 - Introduction

What is the Appraisal and Development Conversations (ADC) approach?

The ADC approach is designed to be a supportive appraisal conversational framework, which encourages regular conversations throughout the year between staff (appraisees) and their manager (appraisers) supported by a minimum of one annual ADC meeting, which should take place between May to the end of September.

What does the ADC cover?

The focus of the ADC is to review achievements/contributions and progress towards objectives, to discuss personal and career development and to plan/agree future objectives. It also provides an opportunity to discuss any other topics, which are important to the appraisee or appraiser including for example wellbeing and work life balance.

Why is ADC important?

The ADC approach provides opportunity for all staff to take part in a process, which supports them to have clarity over their goals and responsibilities, and an opportunity to reflect on achievements and areas for development, enabling performance to be supported, recognised and enhanced. It provides a mechanism to better align individual role contribution(s) to the University strategy, allowing staff to demonstrate how their work contributes to the wider priorities of their School/Department, Faculty/Professional Service Department and University.

How many ADCs should take place every year?

There is no maximum number of ADCs that managers (appraisers) and staff members (appraisees) may have each year, these should be agreed depending on role/individual circumstances. Regular conversations are encouraged, with a minimum of one ADC meeting taking place annually.

What is the ADC cycle?

The ADC cycle is aligned with the University's business planning cycle. The annual ADC meeting should take place between May and the end of September each year.

What is the ADC format?

The ADC is based on three main elements; reflection (reviewing past activities, progress and how achievements have been realised); looking forward (discussing personal development and career aspirations including promotion/career advancement) and future objectives (agreeing future objectives which contribute to University priorities as identified in the Faculty/Professional Service Department operational delivery plans).

What support/learning resources are available?

There is a wide range of [learning resources](#) and training materials available to support the ADC approach, for both the appraiser and appraisee. It is recommended that both appraisers and appraisees review these resources annually to refresh their knowledge and skills and remain updated on any new materials.

We encourage all appraisers/appraisees to watch the [Appraisal and Development Conversation \(ADC\) eLearning module](#).

Do I have to have an ADC?

Yes, all staff are expected to have at least one ADC per year regardless of job family, grade, part-time/fixed-term status and any protected characteristic(s). Spreadsheets confirming that all ADC's have taken place are returned to HR following the annual ADC window (details will be sent out by HR each year).

Do I have a choice of appraiser?

As part of the planning for ADCs, the allocation of appraisers takes place. In the O&F, Technical Services, APM and Childcare Services job families, the appraiser is normally the line manager of the appraisee.

In the R&T job family, where direct line management structures may not be in place or may not enable all R&T staff members to meet with their line manager throughout the ADC cycle, the Faculty/School allocates appraisers based on 'best fit' to enable a meaningful and constructive conversation to take place, with due consideration for Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity.

Who will see my ADC form?

The ADC form is primarily intended to be shared with your appraiser. It may be shared with specific senior managers where there is a legitimate management purpose. It may also be helpful to be used in establishing overall training needs at a School/Department level, in which case it would be anonymised, themed and collated for such purposes.

Section 2 - Planning & Organising**How do I know what my Faculty/School/Department/Professional Service area priorities are?**

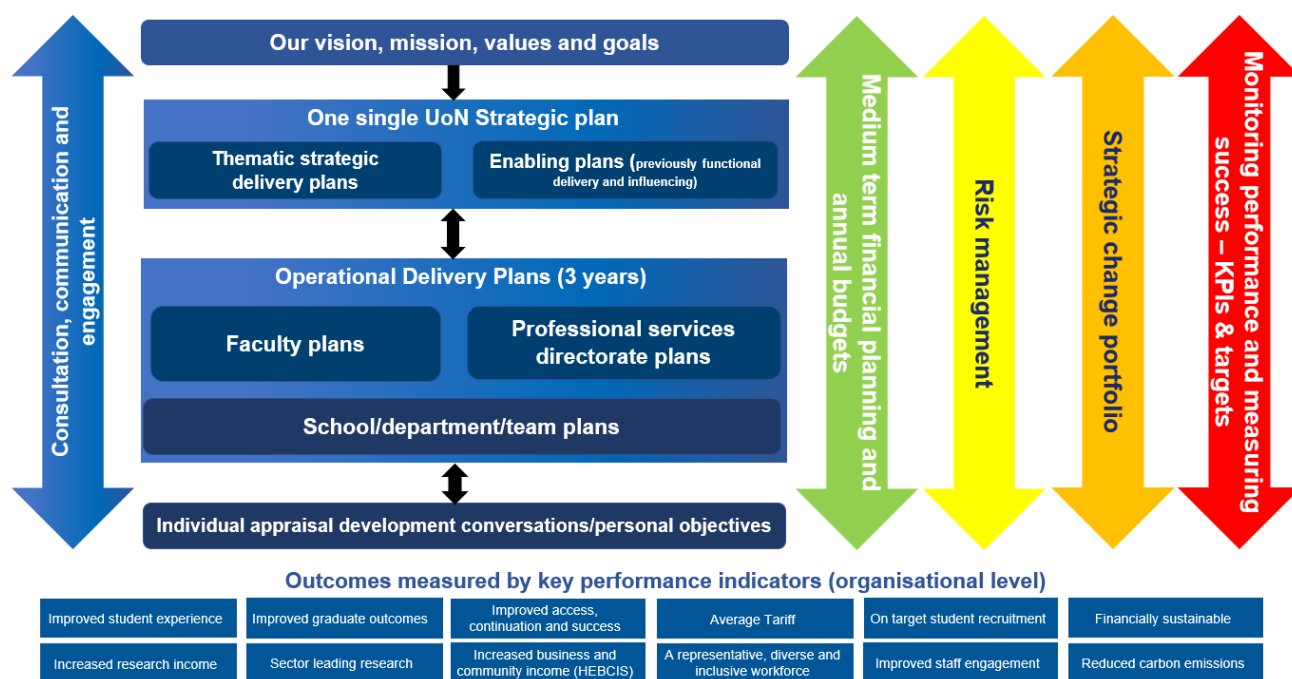
The ADC is aligned to the University's Strategic Framework, which links the University's priorities outlined in the Strategic Delivery Plans and Enabling Plans to those within the Faculty/School/Department/Professional Service area. Each Faculty/Professional Service Department has a three-year operational delivery plan (business plan) which provides context in the ADC for discussing individual contribution towards University priorities and directs future objectives. This engages everyone in the delivery of the University Strategy and helps us to see how we collaboratively and individually contribute to achieving it.

What are the key components of the University's Strategic Framework?

The [University Strategy](#) drives all University activity and sets out what it wants to achieve. The Strategic Delivery Plans (SDPs) and Enabling Plans set out the priorities for the University, and are supported by detailed business planning, as illustrated below.

The business planning process leads to the development and implementation of operational delivery plans that contribute to the achievement of the University's strategic outcomes and are measured by a set of KPIs. These Faculty/Professional Service Department operational delivery plans identify more localised priorities and areas of focus in the short to medium-term.

The University recognises the importance of ensuring there are links between the University aims and priorities, Faculty/School/Department or Professional Services area plans and priorities, and the appraisee's objectives and areas of focus. To support this, the ADC process is aligned with the University's Strategic Framework. This links how appraisee's work and achievements support the wider aims of their workplace and in turn how this supports the achievement of the University.



Who is responsible for establishing the key priorities for my area?

As part of the business planning process, leadership teams are responsible for identifying the key priorities within their area and to share/consult with staff over what these are, as appropriate.

How will my role fit into the Faculty/Professional Service Department operational delivery plan?

The Faculty/Professional Service Department operational delivery plans are designed to underpin discussions between the appraisee and appraiser about how the appraisee's personal objectives contribute to wider priorities and to consider achievements against these areas in ADCs. Some roles will require individually specific or discrete objectives, other roles may benefit from similar or consistent objectives where similar roles exist.

Will all priorities of the Faculty/Professional Service Department operational delivery plan be referenced in my ADC?

Not all priorities included in the operational delivery plan will be relevant to all individuals and, therefore, the appraiser and appraisee should always discuss individual objectives/contribution in the context of the role being undertaken.

How will my objectives be discussed and agreed?

The appraisee and appraiser should discuss and agree objectives to ensure there is shared clarity over expectations and priorities that the individual will be working towards during the year/agreed time period. All objectives should be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound) and aligned with the current and future University/Faculty/School/Department/Professional Service area's objectives and priorities as outlined in the operational delivery plan.

Section 3 - Supporting and recognising performance

Without an ADC rating, how will I know how I am performing?

Constructive feedback should be provided by the appraiser, so that the appraisee is clear what objectives/goals have been achieved and where further development is needed, feedback is also encouraged at regular 1:1 meetings during the year. The appraiser should recognise achievements and contribution during the annual ADC. Both the appraisee and appraiser should contribute to open and constructive conversations about areas for development and any areas where there may be concerns/barriers that need to be addressed.

How will the ADC link to Performance Related Reward?

The two approaches are **separate**, in that the ADC is not a direct mechanism for Performance Related Reward. The Nottingham Reward Scheme is available at:

<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/hr/guidesandsupport/pay/recognitionandawards/index.aspx>.

Should appraisees discuss career aspirations/long term future goals during the ADC?

Yes, absolutely, a key component of ADCs is to provide all staff with the opportunity to have a conversation about career aspirations/long-term future goals. The appraiser's responsibility is to provide a supportive environment to have this conversation and to provide advice and guidance with regards to ways in which these aspirations can be achieved, through personal career development planning in the short and longer-term. Please note: the advice from the appraiser in some circumstances may be to suggest other people/resources that the appraisee could access to support their aspirations or to access further support and guidance needed. Progress towards any career aspirations will be owned by the individual employee. Conversations over development are also encouraged via regular 1:1 discussions during the year.

When reflecting on development, what could be considered?

Development can come from many different areas and appraisees should take responsibility for reflecting on their own development and understanding what is available to support future development. However, the role of the appraiser is equally important in considering what development areas may need to be discussed and what may be available to appraisees to support their development. Personal Development Plans can be used to help structure discussions and plan both short and longer-term career development, see:

<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/professionaldevelopment/professionaldevelopment/recordingreflecting.aspx> for a Personal Development Plan template.

In terms of progression and development, how will objectives support this?

Objectives should provide adequate stretch to help individuals develop skills and experience in both the short and longer-term. Therefore, it is important to discuss what stretch could look like in the context of the current role and future goal aspirations when discussing and agreeing objectives with the appraiser.

If there is a capability/performance improvement process in place, should the annual ADC still take place?

Yes, it should, and objectives for both the ADC and Capability Improvement Plan (or Performance, Development and Improvement Plan) should be the same or similar. Monitoring against these objectives should continue through the capability/performance improvement process following the annual ADC. The ADC should capture an overall reflection of the ADC year.

Section 4 - Considering Individual Circumstances

What if the appraisee has not been at work due to long-term absence (ie maternity/adoption/shared parental leave, sickness absence, study leave or sabbatical)?

The annual ADC should focus on performance whilst at work, which means that appraisees should be appraised on the work they have actually done during the ADC year. The annual ADC should make it clear if this is based on part of the year only, or if absence is the reason for some objectives not being completed in order to ensure the conversation recognises the context of individual circumstances.

When should an ADC take place if someone is on long-term absence?

ADCs should generally take place during May to the end of September, if it is not possible due to long-term absence over this period, then an ADC should take place as soon as possible when that individual has returned to work.

In cases of planned long-term absence (such as maternity/adoption leave/study leave), then an ADC should take place prior to the absence commencing to reflect on the achievements/contributions made during the relevant ADC year, upon returning a further ADC should take place to discuss and agree future objectives and development needs. In cases of planned study leave/sabbatical, then the ADC should take place before the study leave/sabbatical begins to reflect on progress towards objectives, but to also plan and agree the objectives/areas of focus during the period of study leave/sabbatical.

Can poor performance/capability issues be discussed during the ADC?

Yes, if there are performance/capability issues identified during the annual ADC meeting, then these should be discussed and recorded. However, the normal expectation is that any performance/capability issues should be discussed as and when these are identified, rather than waiting until the annual ADC meeting to raise these in the first instance, however, it is recognised that in exceptional circumstances, the annual ADC meeting may provide the earliest opportunity for these issues to be raised and discussed. The Capability Process may be referred to in these circumstances.

What if the appraisee is new to the University?

All staff should have at least an annual ADC meeting regardless of length of service and it is important to meet regularly to discuss progress, review objectives and review development plans.

What if the appraisee has been on secondment/had several roles during the review period?

If the appraisee has had more than one manager or appraiser during the ADC year, the most recent appraiser should take responsibility for completing the annual ADC (providing they have undertaken this role for a period of at least four months) in addition to the regular 1:1 meetings that would normally take place. If these criteria cannot be met, the person who has been the reporting manager for the longest period in that reporting year should carry out the annual ADC.

Completion of the annual ADC will involve consulting the other appraiser(s) and reviewing the information available as appropriate.

After an in-year change in role or change of appraiser, an ADC should take place between the appraisee and the 'new' appraiser as soon as possible. This would follow a closing ADC with the previous appraiser that would take place just before the new role or line of report comes into effect. Should an appraisee take on a new role part way through the ADC year, however, with the appraiser remaining the same, the appraiser should normally carry out an ADC to bring the former role to a close. In addition, at the ADC, the appraisers' expectations and standards for the new role should be communicated clearly, including discussing and agreeing new objectives and development needs.

What if the appraisee is leaving the University (eg through retirement or another job)?

The annual ADC should take place as normal.

What if the appraisee is on a fixed-term contract?

An ADC should still take place to establish expectations during the fixed-term contract, objectives and any development needs, alongside regular 1:1 conversations.

What is the appraisee is on a fractional contract?

An ADC should take place and the timing of this can be considered to ensure that this is organised during normal work time.

What if the appraiser is absent whilst the annual ADCs are taking place?

If an appraiser is absent during the time the annual ADC would normally take place, then the ADC should be rescheduled. If this is not possible, it is the area's management team's responsibility to identify an alternative appraiser.