



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 between staff (appraisees) and their manager (appraisers) during the year supported by one minimum annual ADC meeting.

What does the ADC cover?

The focus of the ADC is to review achievement/contribution 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 has the ADC replaced PDPR?

The University has received lots of feedback on the Personal Development and Performance Review (PDPR) process via focus groups, the staff engagement survey and anecdotal comments/feedback. Overwhelmingly, staff have said that PDPR was not meeting their needs and did not focus enough on the topics important to them. As a result, the University has sought to develop a new process, which better meets the needs of staff and managers.

What are the key changes to ADC compared to PDPR?

Key changes include:

- The removal of a rating outcome from the ADC.
- The link between ADC and Performance Related Reward has been removed with a new Performance Related Reward approach replacing PDPR related reward.
- Introducing a mechanism to better align individual's role contribution(s) to the wider priorities of the University.
- Increased focus on having good quality development conversations as part of the ADC.

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, enhanced and managed effectively.

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 runs from August to July each year, in line with the University year. The annual ADC meeting should take place between from April to the end of July each year.

What is the new 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 balance with/contribute to the Faculty/School/Department/Professional Service Areas priorities).

What support/training is available?

There are a range of resources and training materials available to support the ADC approach, which can be accessed at: <https://training.nottingham.ac.uk/Portal/Home4>.

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).

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 through ADC, 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 with 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 will be supported by a balanced framework approach, which links the University's priorities to those within the Faculty/School/Department/Professional Service area. This can then be used as a tool to help discuss individual contributions to the wider University aims and also to help inform and agree individual objectives in the context of the wider priorities/areas of focus in which that individual works.

What are the key components of the balanced framework?

There are four main areas to the balanced framework; strategic and operational priorities (which cover two sections of the framework) and are as defined and agreed for the specific Faculty/School/Department/Professional Service area; contribution which covers areas such as engagement in international activity, global engagement, collaboration and partnerships, civic contribution, leadership development, financial and environmental sustainability and citizenship; culture and climate which covers aspects of work such as employee engagement, wellbeing, equality, diversity and inclusion, student and staff development and student life.

Who is responsible for establishing the key priorities for my Faculty/School/Department/Professional Service area?

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 balanced framework?

The balanced frameworks 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 areas of the balanced framework be referenced in my ADC?

Not all priorities included in the balanced frameworks 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 balanced frameworks.

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> to 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-July, 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 is 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.