

Durham SU Performance Improvement Policy

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Performance Improvement Policy Statement:

Durham Students' Union requires high standards from all employees in order to provide a consistently efficient and effective service to our members, whilst striving to ensure that our people feel purpose in their work. This procedure describes the responsibilities of all our employees in setting out and meeting standards of work performance.

About this policy

Durham SU's 'Be At Your Best' framework and any related performance man is designed to contribute to the SU's mission, vision, values and strategic plan, and any specific departmental objectives.

Managers and employees will work collaboratively to gain a shared understanding of performance and to agree actions to improve and enhance performance and identify development needs when the requirements of the role are not being met.

All employees will have access to an employee induction and have individual objectives and personal development plans in place as part of the appraisal process.

Line Managers must ensure that this policy is applied in line with the SU's Equality and Diversity policy.

1. Managing Performance Improvement

- 1.1. Before starting to manage performance improvements, managers need to establish whether there is a real performance issue as opposed to a breakdown in communication. Managers should be realistic about performance levels and convey those standards clearly to their team members. New employees, in particular, should be closely supported to ensure that performance expectations are clear and understood.
- 1.2. When faced with problems of poor performance, inappropriate behaviours or work that does not meet the expected standards, managers should be clear on whether they are dealing with an underlying capability or conduct issue.

Capability – is where there is a lack of skill, aptitude or experience, and where the employee has received all necessary training but still cannot achieve a satisfactory level of performance.

Conduct - usually involves a measure of personal responsibility for failing to maintain a 'duty of care', for example deliberately/wilfully ignoring instructions, inappropriate behaviour or producing sub-standard work for which some form of disciplinary action would normally be appropriate. In these instances, please refer to the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.
- 1.3. Poor performance may be linked to a below standard level of attendance or ill-health capability. Managers should refer to the Absence Management Policy and Procedure for more information on supporting employees with ill-health capability.
- 1.4. In considering cases of unsatisfactory work performance, your manager will try to determine the cause as well as any barriers to improved performance and take steps to help you overcome these obstacles. This may include additional support in the form of coaching or training as appropriate.
- 1.5. The first approach with most performance issues will be to try to resolve the problem informally during your usual regular one-to-one discussions as part of your 'Be At Your Best' Plan. An informal action plan should be developed and agreed between you and your manager. This plan will be documented and will include:
 - The required standards;
 - Areas of concern;
 - The likely causes of poor performance and any training needs/solutions to the problem; and
 - Targets for improvement and a timescale for review.
- 1.6. If, at any stage, there is a suggestion that the underlying cause may be linked to a disability or long-term health condition, you may be referred to Occupational Health for professional advice. Full consideration will be given to making reasonable adjustments to protect your health and welfare in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

2. Formal Action

- 2.1. Formal action will only be taken once informal options have been exhausted. Your manager will make it clear during your usual regular one-to-one discussions where an action plan has not led to the required performance improvements.
- 2.2. Any formal action will follow the steps outlined in Durham SU's Disciplinary Procedure.
- 2.3. Managers should seek guidance from the Senior Leadership Team before taking disciplinary action in relation to underperformance.