



# NEWNHAM COLLEGE

C A M B R I D G E   C B 3   9 D F

| Name of Policy:     | WORKPLACE DISCUSSION POLICY AND PROCEDURE |
|---------------------|---|
| Date of Approval    | September 2022                            |
| Approval Authority  | Bursar                                    |
| Date of next review | 3 years after approval date               |
| Administrator:      | B Gafney; HR Manager                      |

## 1. Purpose and Scope

- 1.1. These guidelines provide a framework for the College to carry out annual Workplace Discussions for staff in a fair and consistent way.
- 1.2. These guidelines apply to all those directly employed by the College on permanent or fixed term employment contracts, except for Fellows, for whom there is a separate process.
- 1.3. These guidelines are not contractual, and the College may make amendments at any time. Anyone found to be in breach of these guidelines may be liable to disciplinary action under the provisions of the Disciplinary and Dismissal policy.

## 2. Statement

- 2.1. Each member of staff is entitled to an annual one to one, Workplace Discussion with their Line Manager about their performance in post. It is the Line Manager's responsibility to ensure that this takes place and that the HR Manager is sent the appropriately completed paperwork for each employee on their team.
- 2.2. The occasions on which a Workplace Discussion may not be carried out is if the employee is still under probation (in which case their first Workplace Discussion will occur in the following year) or is serving their notice.
- 2.3. Line Managers and/or their deputies, must carry out a Workplace Discussion for each team member (except those described at 2.2) at least once every 12 months. There is no prescribed time at which a Workplace Discussion should take place, but Line Managers can choose a time that best suits the workload of their departments.

- 2.4. Having an up to date, appropriately carried out and recorded Workplace Discussion is a pre-requisite for any employee to be considered for further training, career progression, or where relevant, increases in pay.
- 2.5. These guidelines are intended to assist both Line Managers and employees in the completion of an annual Workplace Discussion. They are designed to act as a prompt which should give form to both the discussion and to the record of the meeting using the Workplace Discussion form and decisions that were agreed at the meeting. It is not an exhaustive list nor is it prescriptive and must not hinder the natural discussion which is encouraged at a well-rounded and meaningful meeting, and which may well cover areas not listed below.
- 2.6. The completion of the form is to acknowledge and record the work done over the past 12 months by the employee and to agree a plan in line with College, Department and personal objectives, with an indication of any support which might be needed in the 12 months which follow the discussion.
- 2.7. The Workplace Discussion is an opportunity for meaningful and productive **two-way** discussion. For it to be effective it is important that open, honest and constructive comments are made by both parties.
- 2.8. The way in which a Workplace Discussion is conducted should be designed to get the best out of the discussion and there is no one correct method; for example, the Line Manager may, in advance of the meeting, send the employee the form with either section A already completed; or with a request for the employee to complete section A; or blank, as a prompt for them to think about areas for discussion in the meeting.

### 3. **Process – in advance of the Workplace Discussion**

- 3.1. The Line Manager arranges a meeting with the employee and sends them the form in advance. There must be enough time between the employee receiving the form and the meeting to allow time for them to consider the areas for discussion. At least five working days is suggested.
- 3.2. Either the Line Manager or the employee can complete section A of the form, either in advance of, during, or after the meeting.
- 3.3. Where the Line Manager completes section A in advance of the meeting, it may be helpful to facilitate discussion for the Line Manager also to complete section B in advance of the meeting.

3.4. Where the employee completes section A in advance of the meeting, it may be helpful to facilitate discussion for the employee to return the form to the Line Manager, allowing enough time for them to read it before the scheduled Workplace Discussion meeting. At least five working days is suggested, to give the Line Manager the opportunity to complete section B in advance of the meeting and share it with the employee.

3.5. Section B.5 should be used as an opportunity to recognise and celebrate progress and achievement.

#### 4. **Process – during the meeting**

4.1. The employee and Line Manager should complete section C of the form together during the meeting. This section forms the heart of the discussion and will point the way forward over the next 12 months.

4.2. Section C provides an opportunity to review the employee's job description in relation to the aims and objectives of the department and the employee's career and professional development aspirations.

4.3. The Line Manager should ensure that an appropriate opportunity is provided for the employee to raise any concerns, including any concerns about discrimination.

4.4. The Line Manager and the employee should refer back to the previous year's Workplace Discussion for agreed aims and objectives and to evaluate the employee's performance towards achieving these.

4.5. Section C provides an opportunity to reflect and to consider any training and development undertaken in section A, which may assist them in the performance of their role.

4.6. In setting the aims and objectives, it might be useful to think of these in terms of "SMART":

**S** - specific, significant, stretching;

**M** - measurable, meaningful, motivational;

**A** - agreed upon, attainable, achievable, acceptable, action-oriented;

**R** - realistic, relevant, reasonable, rewarding, results-oriented;

**T** - time-based, time-bound, timely, tangible, trackable.

4.7. It should be appreciated that there may be issues raised during the discussion that the Line Manager may be unable to answer immediately or independently. In particular there could be training or development issues where not only the means of provision will need to be sourced, but which will have budget implications. In such cases, the Line Manager should make clear how he/she intends to progress the matter, and this should be recorded on the Workplace Discussion form.

4.8. The Line Manager should clarify what has been agreed and summarise it on the Workplace Discussion form, either at or following the meeting.

## **5. Process – after the meeting**

5.1. Section D provides the employee with the opportunity to make any further comments and to suggest possible improvements in the department or College.

5.2. It is important that the Line Manager considers any suggestions put forward by the employee and gets back to the employee in a timely manner with a considered opinion and details of any action that is going to be taken or reasons why action cannot be taken.

5.3. The Line Manager will complete the form and give it to the employee to read, sign, and date. In doing so, the employee acknowledges that it is an accurate reflection of the meeting and the agreements made during that meeting.

5.4. The employee will return the form to the Line Manager, who in turn, signs and dates it and sends it to the Human Resources (HR) Manager (except where 5.5 below applies).

5.5. In the following scenarios, the Line Manager will send the form to their own manager for any final comments and approval:

- Where the Line Manager is not the head of department
- Where the Line Manager is not a Fellow

5.6. Receipt of the completed Workplace Discussion form (whether at 5.4 or 5.5) maybe by hard copy or scanned version and will be stored securely by the HR Manager on the individual's personnel file and/or in the HR database. A scanned copy of the completed form may be sent to the employee on request.

5.7. The Workplace Discussion form always should be treated as a private and confidential document and must not be left where others can gain access to it.

- 5.8. HR will hold a central record and monitor the completion of Workplace Discussions. Reminders to Line Managers will be sent where Workplace Discussions are late or missing.
- 5.9. It is suggested that it is useful to provide an opportunity for a brief interim meeting six months after the Workplace Discussion to review the aims and objectives, to discuss how the employee is getting on, to consider any unresolved issues and to identify any on-going training requirements.

**Appendix 1:** Workplace Discussion form.

# WORKPLACE DISCUSSION

## RECORD

|                            |  |                         |  |
|----------------------------|--|-------------------------|--|
| <b>Employee:</b>           |  | <b>Job title:</b>       |  |
| <b>Reviewer:</b>           |  | <b>Job title:</b>       |  |
| <b>Date of discussion:</b> |  | <b>Last discussion:</b> |  |

| <b>Section A – Review of year</b> |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <b>1</b>                          | <b>Review of progress and achievements during the past year</b>       |
| <b>2</b>                          | <b>Review of performance against aims and objectives for the year</b> |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| 3  | <b>Review of training and development undertaken during the year</b>            |
| <b>Section B – Line manager’s comments</b>   |   |
| 5  | <b>Review of the period since the last discussion</b>                           |
| 6  | <b>Points for discussion</b>  |
| <b>Section C – Development Plan (to be completed by line manager in conjunction with the employee)</b> |   |
| 7  | <b>Review of job description</b> – are there any changes which need to be made? |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| 8  | <b>Limiting factors or problems experienced</b>                                |
| 9  | <b>Outline of training needs (if necessary) with a plan for implementation</b> |
| 10   | <b>Aims and objectives for next 12 months</b>                                  |
| 11   | <b>Employee's career aspirations</b>   |
| <b>Section D – (to be completed by the employee)</b> |  |
| 12   | <b>Employee's comments</b>   |



|    |  |
|----|--|
| 13 | <b>Suggestions for any improvements in the department or College</b> |
|----|--|

Signed ..... Signed .....  
 (Employee) (Line Manager)

Date ..... Date .....

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 14                             | Comments by Head of Department (where applicable, for details please refer to the policy) |
| <p>Signed ..... Date .....</p> |   |

***When completed, signed and dated, please send a copy to Human Resources***