FAQ on the Performance Review and Development System

PRD process

1. **Q:** An appointee has recently completed a PRD. Is he/she required to undergo the PRD afresh in this year’s exercise?
   **A:** Staff members who have only recently completed a PRD in connection with a major personnel event are normally required to only update their completed PRD report, if they so wish.

2. **Q:** Is an annual review meeting required for academic-related staff who are on substantive terms, have reached the top point of their salary range, and do not anticipate a major personnel event in the upcoming 12 months?
   **A:** Yes, academic-related staff as described above are required to have an annual review meeting.

3. **Q:** What should I do if I expect I will go through a major personnel event in the coming year?
   **A:** You should consult the Head of Department (or the Dean in the case of a unitary Faculty) to appoint 2-3 reviewers for conducting a major review in anticipation of a major personnel event (e.g. contract renewal, tenure, promotion, extension beyond retirement) within the upcoming 12 months. Also, a review meeting is necessary in that particular year. The PRD outcome will be used to inform the processes related to the personnel event.

4. **Q:** Who will be the reviewer(s) for Heads of Department(s) and Chair Professors?
   **A:** Faculty Deans will be the reviewer(s) for Heads of Departments and the Provost will be the endorser. Faculty Deans and Chair Professors are not covered by the PRD as their performance will be evaluated in a separate format.

5. **Q:** What is the procedure to be followed for objecting to an assigned reviewer?
   **A:** The reviewee may convey his/her objection either orally or in writing to the Head who will decide whether the reasons given are valid. If the reviewee and the Head are unable to agree on a reviewer, a higher authority (e.g. the Faculty Dean) should be involved.

6. **Q:** If a reviewee wishes to object to the Head serving as a reviewer, who will determine whether the reasons put forward are justified for an alternative reviewer?
   **A:** Under this circumstance, the reviewee needs to seek the Faculty Dean’s ruling as to whether the reasons justify a replacement reviewer.

7. **Q:** As it may take more than one year for some disciplines to see research outcomes, how can research in these areas be assessed on an annual basis?
   **A:** It is not uncommon for research outputs for some disciplines, particularly in the non-science-based domains, to take a longer time to produce. The PRD for these disciplines may focus on evaluating the progress made, and this should be a point to be taken up during the discussions between the reviewer and the reviewee.
8. **Q:** As some teachers may be on leave in July and August, is it possible to conduct the PRD before or after the suggested timeframe?

A: The 2015 PRD is rolled out on June 15, 2015 and appointees are expected to complete it by August 14, 2014. As the PRD system will be closed on September 15, 2015 (which is the final date for completion), staff members have to note the importance of completing the entire PRD in a timely manner, failing which they will not be eligible for any reward steps.

9. **Q:** How are staff on top point of the salary range to be motivated to undergo PRD?

A: One major emphasis of the PRD system is staff development. Another is on making sure there is communication between the reviewer and the reviewee, on work plans for the coming year and advice on how performance can be enhanced further. For staff who are already on the top point of the scale, PRD is a process to identify staff development plans and explore opportunities for career development.

10. **Q:** Should PRD be conducted on-line?

A: Yes, as the efficiency of the process will be enhanced, and it will facilitate data privacy, retention and retrieval. A number of system enhancements have been made, inclusive of various functions to make the on-line PRD system easier and simpler to use. The number of procedural “loops” and email reminders have been reduced in the system.

**Weighting of Portfolios**

11. **Q:** The prescribed ceiling of 20% for “service/administration” will not motivate staff to take on heavy administrative duties, such as serving on committees.

A: Variations to the prescribed ranges are allowed, provided that they are agreed upon by the Head of Department or Dean of Faculty (in case of unitary faculties) in advance.

12. **Q:** Are the prescribed ranges within portfolios applicable to both serving and new staff?

A: The prescribed ranges set out in the PRD guidelines apply to both serving and new staff.

13. **Q:** What are the various weightings in the portfolio for academic-related staff?

A: The primary function of academic-related staff is either teaching or research, though some staff also carry service/administrative duties. The weightings of these portfolios should be agreed upon by the Department Head in advance.

14. **Q:** How will the weightings of the various portfolio be factored into the reward steps?

A: Deans are charged with the responsibility of determining reward steps. Deans have the discretion of deciding what the impact of the “weights” is, in arriving at a holistic judgement of the reviewee’s performance. Summary statistics of individual appointees’ scores, together with the agreed weightings, will be provided to Faculty Deans to facilitate their consideration of reward steps.
Reward steps

15. Q: Are there negative reward steps in the PRD system?
   A: No, reward steps are either zero (i.e. no salary adjustment) or positive (i.e. upward salary adjustment).

16. Q: How can the variations in the grades given across different Departments be reconciled?
   A: As it is possible that such variations exist, Faculty Deans could help reach an understanding amongst Heads on the standards to be adopted across the Faculty and subject disciplines, before determining the reward steps. Should there be significant differences in the rating standards which need to be bridged, this should be resolved before reward steps are allocated.

17. Q: Is there any recognition for performing staff who are already at the top point of the salary range?
   A: There are possible means to recognize these performing staff, e.g. promotion through established procedures and provision of staff development opportunities.

18. Q: Are there any reasons why staff rated as “poor” in performance can still be awarded “up to 1” reward step?
   A: Flexibility is given to Faculty Deans in determining reward steps. In some instances, poor performance in one particular year was caused by extenuating circumstances and the Dean concerned can exercise his/her discretion to assess the situation and offer an appropriate fractional reward step.

19. Q: Is PRD compulsory and can a reviewee refuse to accept reward steps?
   A: PRD is mandatory but the University cannot impose reward steps if an appointee refuses to accept them.

Appeal mechanism

20. Q: How many members are there on an Appeal Panel?
   A: There are a total of 3 members on an Appeal Panel, with one member from each of the three categories stipulated in the Procedures for Appeal against the Outcome of Performance Review and Development (accessible also from the HRMI website).

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