

*How to...*

## Hold an informal capability meeting

While the vast majority of staff meet or exceed the standards required of them, problems can and do arise and managers should identify and address shortcomings in performance as soon as possible.

The focus of these conversations is to resolve performance problems by appropriately supporting the employee so they can perform to the standard required.

In partnership with managers, staff and trade union colleagues, our aim is to create a high support/high challenge performance culture where individuals are clear what is expected of them, receive regular feedback and support and where underperformance is addressed.

### Who?

- The employee and their manager/supervisor

### Why?

- To bring performance concerns to the attention of the employee, explore causes, identify responsibilities and agree actions to be taken.
- Where there are concerns about an employee's performance, their manager will meet with them to reflect those concerns and explore ways of addressing them. The manager may issue advice and guidance to the employee or provide coaching or take other informal action.
- It should also be recognised that capability problems may be outside the employee's direct control and can be symptomatic of underlying work problems or other personal issues. Consequently there is a need to treat all capability issues with care and sensitivity and to identify and (where appropriate) address the real causes. Particular care should be taken when health issues are involved and advice sought from relevant specialists as appropriate.

### When?

- Managers should seek to resolve performance issues at the earliest opportunity
- Ensure enough time is available to have a full discussion.

### Where?

- A private meeting place away from interruptions.

## Format

### Nature of concerns

- Explain the performance issue.
- Listen to the employee's views and any mitigating circumstances that may be affecting their performance.
- Give consideration to any appropriate University policies or support services, such as:
  - the University's [employee assistance scheme](#)
  - the policy on [alcohol, drug and substance misuse](#)
  - the [Code of Practice on Harassment](#)
  - the policy on [managing ill-health and sickness absence](#)
  - the policy on [disability in employment](#)

### Expected standards of performance

- Be clear on the difference between their performance and what is expected of them in their role and at their grade.

### Actions by employee or manager

- Line managers must provide employees with access to the support or training they need to meet the required standards.
- Record the actions or objectives that the individual needs to take or achieve. A [template improvement plan](#) is available to help with this.

### Timescales and review dates

- Set timescales that actions will be completed by.
- Set a date to informally review progress towards the required improvements.

### Outcome

- Confirm the improvement in performance required, and the timescale for improvement.
- Confirm if the performance does not meet the improvement required then you may continue with an informal approach or, that a more formal approach could be considered, in accordance with the University's [capability procedure](#).
- Confirm that if the required improvement is achieved the matter will be considered resolved.

### Next steps

- Notes should be made to record the discussions and to confirm the outcome.
- Confirm the outcomes of any discussions in writing to the employee. You may want to attach a completed [improvement plan](#).
- File the note securely on the departmental file

## Further support

- You may find this training helpful: [Honest conversations for managers](#)
- Details of help and support available through the employee assistance scheme can be accessed at [Well-being/Employee Assistance](#) or 0800 030 5182