Landward Research

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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1 Performance Management Policy Statement

The people who work for Landward Research are important to the company, we want to get the best out of them and want them to get the best out of working for us.

At Landward Research this involves agreeing what outcomes staff members will deliver and having regular performance discussions to celebrate successes, acknowledge strengths, and identify areas for growth and improvement. **Performance Management is about conduct, not capability.**

This procedure applies equally and fully to the staff of Landward Research Ltd and to the staff of all subsidiary companies of Landward Research Ltd (on 30th November 2021: Landward Research Teoranta, Landward Limited Liability Corporation and Landward Limited).

2 Performance Management Procedure

2.1 Introduction

At Landward Research, our people are our greatest creators of value, this makes good performance management critical for the success of Landward Research.

For Landward Research, performance management is as a continuous chain of connected activities that should be approached holistically, not as a discrete process that is occasionally revisited. Performance management is used to ensure that all staff understand what's expected of them, and that they are motivated, that they have the necessary skills, resources and support, and that they are accountable.

The key components of performance management at Landward Research are:

- Agreeing what objectives staff will work towards
- Agreeing and supporting a learning and development plan to enable staff to achieve their objectives and develop their professional skills, abilities and knowledge
- Regular performance discussions to celebrate successes, acknowledge strengths, and identify areas for growth and improvement
- A shared record of performance discussion will be kept by both the staff member and their line manager

Figure 1. Annual appraisal cycle: setting expectations > monitoring performance > annual review.

Good performance management enables our staff to see their part in Landward Research's mission and strategy, it is used to improve performance of our staff – and ultimately the whole organisation, and it holds people to account for their performance. Our performance management procedure recognises that human attributes are malleable and can be improved through training and practice.

At Landward Research, performance management is not linked to pay and reward.

Performance management should not be overly time consuming and energy sapping, nor should it be disappointing or divisive and ultimately demotivating for staff. All staff must be treated fairly and equitably.

The purpose of this procedure is to:

- Provide managers with a framework and guidance that will enable them to clearly communicate the standard of work expected and to ensure the standards are met
- Identify and implement mechanisms to enable staff members to reach the required standard of performance
- Ensure fair and consistent treatment for all staff members

2.2 Objectives

The first step in the performance management cycle is to set objectives for the year ahead. These should be agreed by the staff member and their line manager at the start of their appraisal cycle. They should be recorded on Breathe HR and the Landward Research Appraisal Form by the staff member and approved by their line manager. These objectives should be reviewed during regular performance discussions to ensure they still reflect the staff member's main focus and updated if necessary. The number of objectives will vary as required by the staff member's role and their development needs, and each member of staff might typically have between three to five objectives.

For some objectives, it will be appropriate to specify deliverables. Deliverables are the tangible (not necessarily physical) outcomes of timebound tasks that have defined start and end points. Deliverables may be agreed between the staff member and the line manager, or they may be set by the line manager. If deliverables are specified, then these should be recorded on Breathe HR.

2.2.1 How To Set Objectives

Objectives differ depending on whether the work that they relate to is relatively straightforward or more complex. Most staff members at Landward Research will be regularly combining both straightforward and more complex work, and their objectives should reflect this.

For work that is relatively straightforward (a familiar and predictable set of tasks to be completed), objectives should be clear and specific, challenging yet achievable. In general – objectives that are challenging are motivating and they help staff to achieve their goals. Objectives also need to be realistic, so that staff feel they can achieve them.

For relatively straightforward work, it is helpful to set objectives that are SMART:

- **Specific:** What exactly needs to be achieved?
- **Measurable**: How will you know that an objective has been achieved?
- **Achievable**: Is the staff member capable of achieving the objective?
- **Realistic:** Does the staff member feel committed to the objective and do they believe they have, or can acquire, the necessary skills to achieve it?
- **Timebound**: When the does objective need to be achieved by?

For aspects of the role that involve complex tasks, objectives should be set based on 'do-your-best' expectations or focused on learning and behaviour.

Because a high level of focus is needed to navigate complex tasks while acting in an appropriate manner, specific and challenging goals can detract from the immediate things staff members need to focus on to perform.

When staff members are learning new skills or are at an early developmental stage in their role, short-term behavioural and learning goals may be the most effective way to drive performance while the staff member is mastering the set of skills involved in delivering that particular aspect of their job.

Normally, Landward Research staff members should have a mix-and-match set of work objectives that include clear and specific straightforward outcome objectives and 'do-your-best' complex outcome objectives. Staff members will also set their own learning and development objectives linked to their Learning and Development Plan.

2.3 Learning And Development Plan

Once objectives have been agreed, the staff member and their line manager should agree a learning and development plan for the next appraisal cycle. This should be recorded using the Landward Research Appraisal Form.

2.4 Feedback

Feedback – positive or negative – should be given as soon as possible following the event or piece of work that it relates to, rather than stored up for performance discussions. Feedback should be given in private, and should be seen as separate to public praise and recognition of good work. Staff members should be treated with fairness when giving feedback, with the line manager making an effort to focus on the positives and building on what works.

2.4.1 The Strengths-Based Approach

Whenever possible, during performance management discussions (informal catch-ups, annual appraisals, and when giving reactive feedback) line managers should take a strengths-based approach.

2.5 Performance Discussions

Performance discussions are important to celebrate success, acknowledge strengths, and identify areas for growth and improvement. They are an opportunity for staff members and their line managers to review performance and agree plans moving forward to ensure that staff members are supported to meet their expected standards of performance. They are also an opportunity for staff to talk to their line manager about issues they are having in work or at home that are affecting their performance. Line managers should use performance discussions to check in on the wellbeing of staff members.

Meetings should be planned in advance, held in private and free from interruptions.

Both the line manager and staff member should come prepared to discuss:
- What things have gone well and what has been more challenging
- Any concerns or areas where further help may be useful
- How they have performed against their performance measurements
- Ways to build on their achievements going forward

Landward Research recognises that discussing performance can be very emotive. Managers should do their best to make staff feel like they have been treated fairly and that they do not feel like they are being criticised personally. As part of this, managers should actively check in with staff members following a performance discussion to find out how they are feeling and if they feel the conversation and assessment was fair and useful.

A record should be kept of all performance discussions.

2.5.1 Regular Check-Ins

Staff members should agree with their line manage how often they will have their regular performance management check-ins/one to ones (at least at the end of each project or quarterly – whichever is soonest).

These check-ins should be coaching oriented. Emphasis should be placed on the staff member's views, with the manager primarily 'actively listening' and asking questions; the conversation should be two-way.

Regular check-ins should be used to:
- Acknowledge good work and show that it is valued and appreciated
- Raise potential issues before they become more serious – there should be no surprises at the annual appraisal meeting
- Provide support for the staff member to improve performance and/or develop their professional skills, abilities and knowledge

These check-ins do not have to take up much time. In most situations, they should be short and casual conversations that just check on how things have been going and whether anything could be improved.

After each check-in, the staff member should add an 'Employee Summary' to Breathe HR and the line manager should add 'Reviewer Notes' so that there is a record.

2.5.2 Annual Appraisals

Once a year, staff members should meet with their line manager to review performance over the past year. These annual meetings are secondary to more regular meetings – they are a way of formalising the discussions that have already taken place during the year. The results of annual appraisals should never be a surprise to staff members.

The Landward Research Appraisal Form should be used to record agreed progress against Objectives and Learning and Development Goals.

- The line manager should complete the Annual Appraisal Record of Objectives and Delivery and send it to the staff member to check
- Areas of learning and development that will be focused on in the next year should then be recorded by the staff member and the staff member should sign the Appraisal Form and return it to the Line Manager for their sign off
- Once the final text is agreed, the form should be uploaded to the documents section of the staff member's profile on Breathe HR

After the appraisal, the staff member should add an 'Employee Summary' of the meeting to Breathe HR, and the line manager should add 'Reviewer Notes'.

Line managers should check in with staff members a few days after the appraisal to see how they think it went, in particular whether they feel it was fair and useful.

3 Managing Poor Performance

Where a member of staff's performance is considered by their line manager to be below acceptable standards, the normal course of action in the first instance would be for line manager to attempt to resolve problems with the staff member in confidence and on an informal basis.

The line manager will work supportively with the staff member before entering the formal stages. A brief note will be made of the general issues discussed and the dates of any meetings. At this stage line managers are encouraged to set and clarify objectives, help with the prioritisation of action and agree timescales and review dates. It is anticipated that the majority of poor performance problems will be resolved in this way.

3.1 The Formal Procedure

This formal procedure may become necessary if initial management support does not lead to an improvement in performance.

At all stages, the method to be followed by the line manager will be:

- To investigate the facts and circumstances of the under-performance in an open and exploratory manner.
- To state the problem(s) and provide evidence to support this.
- To give an opportunity for the staff member to respond to the issues raised.
- To state the line manager and/or company's expectations i.e. what acceptable performance should look like.
- To identify the support, training and other resources needed to assist the staff member in achieving the required standards.
- To set a reasonable timescale over which performance will be monitored for improved performance. Wherever possible targets and timescales should be agreed between the line manager and the staff member.

3.1.1 Stage 1

The formal procedure should be initiated if there has been insufficient improvement following initial management support or where the matter is sufficiently serious that informal discussions are deemed inappropriate. The line manager will consult Human Resources for advice and guidance before taking formal action.

The line manager will invite the employee to a meeting. At all stages, all parties must make every possible effort to attend such meetings. The staff member should be given a minimum of five working days' notice of the time, venue and purpose of the meeting and prior to the meeting should be given copies of any relevant information and evidence. The staff member will be advised of their right to be accompanied at the meeting by a trade union representative or another member of staff. A Human Resources staff member should normally be present. If witnesses are to be called by either the staff member or line manager, these arrangements should be communicated before the meeting.

At the meeting the line manager will:

- Explain the areas in which the staff member's performance falls below the standards expected.
- Give the staff member the opportunity to respond.
- Set and agree an improvement plan incorporating targets, standards, deadlines and further support, training and guidance to help the staff member to improve their performance.
- Set a reasonable time frame within which improvement is expected, usually no more than three months.
- Arrange a date to meet at the end of this review period.
- Advise the staff member of their right of appeal against any outcome of the meeting.

Following the meeting, the line manager will write to the employee (within five working days) to confirm the outcome. If the line manager confirms that there is a performance issue to address, a first written warning will be issued. A copy of the outcome letter should also be sent to Human Resources to be placed on the staff member's personal file, accompanied by the improvement plan. Any warning at this stage will remain in place for six months.

The line manager will set up regular (at least monthly) progress review meetings with the staff member during the review period. At the end of the review period, the line manager will confirm, in writing, to the staff member whether performance has become satisfactory or if further action is necessary.

3.1.2 Stage 2

Where the line manager considers that there has been insufficient improvement following Stage 1, or where a matter is sufficiently serious to progress directly to Stage 2, the line manager will invite the employee to a Stage 2 meeting, which will follow the same format as for Stage 1.

For immediate progression to Stage 2 the performance of an individual would have to include actions which, if not corrected, could represent a risk to a Landward Research's essential operations, finances or reputation.

Following the Stage 2 meeting, the line manager will determine whether a final written warning should be issued. Any warning issued at this point will remain in place for 12 months.

The staff member may be required to participate in further training or development and further targets will be set to be achieved over a review period. The staff member should be advised that, unless improvement over a sustained period of time is evident at the end of the review period, the matter will progress to Stage 3 at which point redeployment or termination of employment may result.

At the end of the review period, the line manager will advise the staff member whether performance has become satisfactory or whether further action will be taken under Stage 3.

3.1.3 Stage 3

Where there has been insufficient improvement or where a matter is sufficiently serious to progress directly to Stage 3, the case should be reviewed by the CEO.

For immediate progression to Stage 3 the performance of an individual would have to include gross misconduct (when a staff member has done something that is very serious or has very serious effects). The Disciplinary Procedure and Dismissal Procedure relate to matters of gross misconduct and should be referred to alongside this Performance Management Procedure.

The staff member will be given a minimum of five working days' notice of the time, venue and purpose of the meeting along with copies of any relevant evidence that is to be referred to at the meeting. The staff member will be advised of their right to be accompanied at the meeting by a trade union representative or another member of staff. Stage 3 meetings will be chaired by the CEO or their nominee and a member of Human Resources will attend.

If medical advice is received which indicates that the individual is unfit to attend the Stage 3 meeting, all possible alternatives will be considered e.g. conducting the meeting at a different location, through written submission of comments, or with a representative attending in place of the employee.

The line manager will generally present the case and the staff member will be given the opportunity to respond. The Chair may ask questions of the line manager and/or staff member. The meeting will then usually be adjourned to consider all the facts before a decision is reached.

The Chair will consider:
- Whether the process has been fair and reasonable. If not, the case may be overturned or a further review period set for improvement.
- The possibility of redeployment to another role.
- Dismissal on grounds of capability

The CEO will confirm the outcome of the Stage 3 meeting in writing. Where the outcome is dismissal, the individual will be advised of the date on which their contract of employment will end and the appropriate period of notice they are being given. If the outcome is an offer of redeployment, then the individual will be given sufficient time, normally 10 working days, to consider the offer and respond in writing. Refusal of such an offer will normally result in termination of employment on grounds of capability. If redeployment is to a role at a lower grade, then no pay protection will apply.

3.2 Suspension

Suspension will only be used in serious cases of alleged misconduct, where it is considered necessary by the CEO to remove an employee from the workplace in order to allow a full investigation and to protect both the company and the staff member from the risk of further allegations.

Suspension does not in itself constitute formal action. It must be stressed that precautionary suspension is not a disciplinary sanction nor is it a presumption of guilt; it is a means of facilitating a proper and fair investigation of a matter. Suspension will be with full pay and may only be authorised by the CEO, or, in the event of their absence or unavailability, by a person nominated by the Chair of the Board of Directors.

3.3 Appeals

A staff member may appeal to the Chair of the Board of Directors against any formal action that has been initiated under the Performance Management Procedure. If the Chair has already been involved in an earlier stage of the procedure, then the staff member may appeal to any other member of the Board of Directors. The staff member will be required to provide grounds of their appeal and any relevant details required to support their appeal.

Stage 1 and Stage 2 appeals must be lodged in writing within five working days of receipt of the formal outcome of the Performance Management meeting and should be addressed to the Chair of the Board of Directors.

Stage 3 appeals must be lodged in writing within 10 working days of receipt of the written confirmation of the Stage 3 Performance Management meeting and should be addressed to the Chair of the Board of Directors.

Appeals can be made on the following grounds:

- There is new evidence not already considered. The staff member should say why it was not available at the original hearing.
- The severity of the outcome.
- The correct procedure was not followed.
- The decision was unfair because the evidence did not support it.

Two Appeal Managers, who have had no prior involvement in the case, will be appointed by the Board of Directors. The staff member will be given at least seven calendar days' notice to attend an appeal hearing.

If the staff member has any further written submissions, and/or documents to provide, these should be provided to the Appeal Managers at least two working days in advance of the meeting. A Human Resources staff member will be present and a note-taker may be present. The person who made the decision that is being appealed against may be called to explain that decision.

On appeal, the Appeal Managers will have the power to uphold, overturn or amend the decision that is being appealed against. The appeal decision is final and shall be confirmed in writing to the staff member within five working days of the hearing. A copy of the appeal meeting notes will also be provided.

This will be the final level at which an appeal may be addressed under the terms of this procedure.

Whilst every endeavour will be made to comply with timescales, due to the complexity and/or specific circumstances of cases, timescales may have to be extended by the Appeals Managers. In such circumstances the staff member will be advised of the reasons for any delay.

4 Other Related Documentation

Where necessary, this policy should be read in conjunction with other Landward Research Policies, such as:

- Code of Conduct
- Grievance Policy and Procedure
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- Dismissal Procedure

5 Review

Landward Research will review this Procedure on an ongoing basis and carry out a formal review not less than every 3 years. Such review shall take into account the operation of the Procedure since the last formal review, any legal or regulatory developments, an assessment of current best practice and any other relevant information.