

Ollscoil Mhá Nuad
Maynooth University



Maynooth University

Coaching Policy

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Relevant Information

[Maynooth University Strategic Plan 2023 - 2028](#)

[Maynooth University Equality & Diversity Policy](#)

[Human Resources Website](#)

[Learning and development for Staff](#)

[Course Directory](#)

[Education Support Policy and Form](#)

[Study and Exam Leave Policy and Form](#)

[Fee Remission Policy and Form](#)

General queries on the policy can be made to people.development@mu.ie

Definitions

For the purposes of Coaching in Maynooth University the following definitions apply.

Coaching: Coaching is a recognised practice and approach to personal and professional development, supporting organisational change, enabling performance, and problem solving. It is non-directive, focusing on specific skills and goals. Coaching is always confidential and individualised.

Coach: An accredited person in Coaching Skills that supports an individual in achieving a specific personal or professional goal.

Coachee: A Coachee refers to an individual who receives coaching. When someone engages in a coaching relationship, they become the Coachee. Coachees work with a coach to explore their goals, challenges, and personal development areas, seeking guidance and support to achieve positive outcomes.

Conflict of Interest: A conflict of interest is a set of circumstances, relationships or events that could impact on the objectivity of the coaching relationship.

Coaching Supervision: Is a collaborative process that supports coaches in their professional development and reflective practice. It involves dialogue between a supervisor and a coach, aiming to enhance coaching effectiveness, and the coach's professional identity. Through interactive reflection, interpretative evaluation, and sharing expertise, coaching supervision helps coaches continuously improve their practice. Integrating supervision processes ensures ongoing quality and impact.

1. Introduction

Enabling our people at Maynooth University to develop is key to its success. We want to create a University wide learning culture that empowers individuals to take charge of their own development. By creating the right environment, staff can develop and grow, supported throughout their journey by a robust Developmental Review framework and a future career development framework. Through developmental review conversations, staff members can reflect on their progress, set meaningful goals and give and receive feedback, making their developmental journey both dynamic and impactful. The ongoing review conversations should foster clear, open and two-way communication regarding ways of sustaining and improving individual development and identifying and addressing individual needs.

Coaching can play a crucial role in organisational development, talent management, and in fostering a coaching culture in organisations. It aims to enhance the experience and engagement of staff.

A coach supports and guides individuals or groups in areas of personal or professional development. They help coachees identify their goals, overcome obstacles, and make progress towards achieving desired outcomes. Coaches provide a structured and supportive environment for their coachees to explore their potential, gain clarity, and act towards positive change. Through effective communication, active listening, and powerful questioning techniques, coaches facilitate self-discovery and growth. Their role includes helping coachees set realistic and meaningful goals, develop action plans, and hold them accountable for their progress. Coaches often work with individuals seeking personal development, career advancement, improved relationships, lifestyle changes, or enhanced well-being.

The focus of coaching is to,

- Unlock the potential to enhance performance.
- Facilitate reflection and create an understanding of strengths, challenges and highlight areas an individual wishes to improve or develop.
- Support individuals to develop and work towards achieving long term goals.
- Help adapt to changing work conditions and circumstances.
- Provide a greater understanding of team dynamics.
- Provide a safe space to communicate openly and honestly.
- Develop results that work for the individual.

Coaching, mentoring, giving and receiving feedback are essential skills for managers and Heads to have as part of their people management responsibilities. This policy refers to the internal and external coaching provided centrally by People Development, HR for staff. Coaching in the University is for staff who wish to have a person assigned to them who is independent of their department, to work through a development goal.

Coaching in the University is not designed to specifically identify an individual's suitability for promotion, either through personal promotion schemes or by appointment to a higher grade but aims to facilitate and increase the effectiveness of individual's participation in these processes.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the Coaching Policy is to outline how staff can be involved in coaching as a Coach and/or Coachee.

The purpose of Coaching in the University is to support the professional growth of the individual at any stage of their career.

Coaching will expand existing development support available in the University, forming part of the University's commitment to developing and supporting staff throughout the employee lifecycle. Coaching aims to enhance staff career development and performance and develop further flexible personal, professional and leadership opportunities for staff as part of the Career Planning and Development Framework.

3. Policy Scope

Coaching is available to all part-time and full-time staff on permanent and temporary contracts in the University who have successfully completed their probation.

4. Policy Principles

Coaching in Maynooth University is underpinned by the following principles:

- Engagement in a coaching relationship is on a voluntary basis for both the Coach and the Coachee.
- Both parties commit to the coaching process and hold each other accountable.
- The Coaching relationship is confidential, discussions between the Coach and the Coachee must not be divulged to a third party unless with the agreement of both parties.
- It is a partnership built upon trust, mutual respect, honesty and integrity where open communication and honesty are essential.
- The Coach empowers the Coachee to take responsibility for their own learning and development.
- Coachees need to be open to learning and willing to take courageous steps toward their goals.
- Pairing of Coaches and Coachees will follow the selection process outlined in this policy.
- Coaching is distinct and separate from other management processes in the University e.g. Promotions, Tenure Track, Performance Management, etc.
- Handling workplace relationship issues can be dealt with in the coaching process, but coaching is not the forum for dealing with specific workplace issues around relationship issues with colleagues (there are alternative supports for these types of issues).
- There is no requirement to keep written records.

5. The Coaching Process

5.1 External Coaching Panel

Coaching is offered as part of senior leadership programmes, to support learning from the programmes. A panel of external Coaches are available for these programmes. A coaching profile is available for each coach, and relevant staff can select a coach they feel will be a good match for their coaching goal. After a coach is selected, the staff member will have an initial meeting with them. The initial meeting with the Coach, is an opportunity to meet and assess the suitability of the Coach and if their style fits with the Coachees needs and commitments. People Development fund up to a maximum of **5 hours** of coaching, per person, as part of these leadership programmes.

This external coaching panel is also available to staff where coaching is identified as a suitable development support for by their Head of Department, and the cost of this coaching is covered by the individual's department.

5.2 Internal Coaching Panel

An Internal Coaching Panel is available to provide qualified Coaches within the University, to coach staff. The Coaching panel has been established via Expression of Interest (EOI). All Coaches on the internal panel are staff of the University and hold a recognised coaching accreditation with a minimum of 40-hours evidence of coaching practice post-qualification. Coaches on the internal panel are required to engage in ongoing supervision and form part of a coaching accredited body as chosen by the University.

The internal coaching panel will remain open to new members who fulfil these requirements. Eligible staff should discuss their interest in being an internal Coach with their Head/manager in advance of submitting their expression of interest to people.development@mu.ie, as the expectation would be for internal coaches to conduct their coaching sessions during normal working hours. It is not guaranteed that all staff who express an interest in being a coach selected as a coach or be paired with a coachee.

The specific criteria to qualify to form part of the coaching panel is as follows:

- Be a staff member of the university with 2 years remaining on your contract of employment.
- Hold a coaching qualification accredited by a recognised coaching body (e.g. [AC](#), [EMCC](#), [ICF](#))
- Be available to commit to a maximum of 15 hours of coaching per annum.
- Be available to commit to and engage in quarterly coaching supervision sessions (with an external supervisor) of about 1-1.5-hour duration each.
- Be available to attend required Coaching Panel meetings once the panel is appointed.

Applications to be coached by a member of the Internal Coaching Panel will be open all year-round. A [coaching request form](#) is required to be completed by an interested staff member and is available on the People Development website. Staff must have the approval of their Head/manager to partake in the coaching. Staff being offered coaching as part of another development support (e.g. leadership programme, will not be provided with coaching from the Internal panel in the same academic year). Staff who are being mentored will not be offered coaching in the same academic year. This is to allow staff who are not availing of those options' priority access to the coaching.

The requests will be addressed as they are received. When faced with simultaneous coaching requests from staff members exceeding the number of Coaches available, the Chair will consider, the nature of the request (individual needs, goals, specific challenges). This may include a conversation with the applicant to explore their application in more detail and be to establish the urgency of their request. Staff will be prioritised based on their coaching goal and the urgency of the coaching requirement. Pairing will depend on the number of available and suitable Coaches from the Internal Coaching Panel.

Individuals who wish to undertake coaching (the Coachee) will be paired with a Coach by the Chair of the Internal Coaching Panel. Coaches will be matched with someone outside of their department, based on their experience as per their Coaching Profile and the reason coaching is required. The Coach does not select who they will coach, however, if there is a conflict of interest with the Coachee they are paired with, they should disclose this to the Chair.

Once referred to a Coach, it is the responsibility of the Coachee to liaise and engage with the Coach directly and organise times and locations of the sessions as it suits their schedule. Each Coach and Coachee should organise an initial 30-minute introductory meeting where they can both establish that the coaching relationship can progress ('chemistry' check). Where it is clear after the introductory meeting that the coaching relationship cannot progress, they need to inform the Chair who, in turn, will aim to assign a new Coach or place the Coachee on a waitlist until a suitable Coach becomes available. Typically, the Coachee will receive 3 coaching sessions. The first is usually 1.5 hours duration followed by 2 sessions of 1 hour duration. Each session is on a one-to-one basis, is individualised and personal.

Participation in coaching will be subject to available capacity. It may not be possible to find a suitable Coach for each expression of interest received and therefore being appointed a Coach is not guaranteed.

6. Responsibilities

6.1. Role of the Coach

It is the responsibility of the Coach to:

- Inform People Development of their availability to facilitate coaching.
- Maintain confidentiality when engaging in the Coaching process.
- Maintain their practice and strive for continuous improvement through the engagement and delivery of Coaching and/or engaging in Group Supervision.
- Create a conducive environment for coaching conversations, ensuring openness and trust.
- Establish rapport with the Coachee, making them feel comfortable and encouraging open dialogue.
- Help the Coachee to clarify their goals, define their objectives and understand the reasons behind them.
- Assist Coachees in devising practical plans to achieve their goals.
- Provide constructive feedback on the Coachee's progress.
- Offer support and encouragement when needed.
- Recognise the Coachees achievements to reinforce their progress.

Guidelines are available for external coaches on our expectations of them.

6.2. Role of the Coachee

It is the responsibility of the Coachee to:

- Schedule the sessions with their appointed Coach.
- Maintain confidentiality when engaging in the Coaching process.
- Recognise areas where they need growth or development.
- Actively participate in defining what they want to achieve and why.
- Commit to making necessary changes based on coaching insights.
- Seek feedback and reflect on it to enhance self-awareness.
- Communicate openly with the Coach about their thoughts and progress.
- Be open to trying different approaches, behaviours, and skills to learn and improve.

6.3. Role of the University Executive

The main responsibilities of UE will be to:

- Act as champion for coaching within their own units and across the University.

6.4. Role of Head of Department/Unit

The main responsibilities of the Head of Department, which can be extended to the individual's manager will be to:

- Discuss coaching with staff members who wish to engage in coaching and support them if appropriate.
- Instil coaching into the organisational culture.
- Discuss the impact of the coaching with those who complete it from their department, ideally through their Developmental Review.

6.5. Role of People Development, HR

People Development will have overall responsibility for the Coaching process, which will include:

- Establishing an external panel of Coaches as per Procurement Guidelines.
- Establishing an internal panel of Coaches.
- Managing Expressions of Interest as relevant to build a pipeline of internal Coaches.
- Assuming the role of Chair of the Internal Coaching Panel.
- Promoting and providing the Internal Coaching Panel access to Group Supervision (3 meetings per year).
- Providing coaching as required and adhering to the principles outlined in this policy when doing so.
- Pairing of Coachees and Coaches.
- Following up with Coach and/or Coachee on any situation where the 'chemistry' check fails, and the coaching relationship cannot commence.
- Collating feedback via evaluation forms at the end of the Coaching relationship and share with the Coach when there is consent from the Coachee to do so.
- Reporting on coaching activity on an annual basis.

7. Impact of Coaching

The Coaching will be evaluated at the end of the coaching sessions by People Development, HR. It is encouraged that heads of department discuss the impact of the coaching with those who complete it from their department, ideally through their Developmental Review.

8. Data Retention

The documentation associated with Coaching shall be stored in accordance with the University's Records Retention Schedules.

9. Monitoring and Review

The Director of Human Resources or their nominee will monitor the application of the policy. This policy shall be reviewed after a period of 3 years.

Effective date: November 2024

Maynooth University
Human Resources Office
Maynooth, Co. Kildare, Ireland.

Oifig Acmhainní Daonna
Ollscoil Mhá Nuad
Má Nuad, Co. Chill Dara, Éire

E people.development@mu.ie **W** maynoothuniversity.ie