

Developmental Review (DR) Frequently Asked Questions

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Overview of framework and who is within scope

1. What is the Developmental Review (DR) Framework?

The Developmental Review is Maynooth University's '*Framework*' for facilitating individuals to better understand how they contribute to and support the delivery of the University's Vision, Purpose, Values and Strategy through their individual and unit responsibilities.

2. What is the purpose of the Developmental Review?

The purpose of the *Framework* is to provide an opportunity for employees to reflect on their current objectives, contributions and any challenges they experience during a specific timeline. It will also set future individual objectives and inform career planning and development requirements. The process will help to align the objectives of the Reviewee with the goals of the Unit and with those of the University, providing for a more formal channel of communication and feedback between reviewers and reviewees.

The aim is to support the staff member to flourish and grow in their role. This is done through reflection, planning, goal setting and discussion. This should be discussed and then reviewed through a mid-cycle review.

3. What are the key benefits of a Developmental Review?

The review recognises individual contributions, encourages inclusivity and consistency of approach across the University and cultivates a culture of continuous improvement and learning within the University. It focuses on short and long-term career planning of individuals, aligned with Unit and University strategic priorities.

4. Who should complete a Developmental Review?

The Framework will apply to all employees of the University who have at least one year remaining on their contract of employment, from when their review is due to commence.

All reviewees must have successfully completed their probation *before* being part of the Developmental Review process.

Employees on long term absences, sabbatical, career break, statutory leave or long-term sick leave, are not expected to complete a review for the duration of the leave, unless they request a review through their Head of Unit.

5. Is participation mandatory?

It is anticipated that all eligible employees will co-operate fully in this process. You are expected to continue your professional development during the term of your contract by participating in the University's Developmental Review. It is hoped the benefits of the review will encourage staff to participate.

6. If a staff member may receive an extension to their contract before Cycle 1 of the Developmental Review commences should a Head of Unit include them for reviewer/ee training?

If there is a chance, they may have an extension to their contract, they can opt into the reviewer/reviewee training. This does not indicate they will receive a contract extension but will ensure they have the relevant knowledge of the process, should they be part of it.

7. If a staff member completes their probation after the initial workshops are rolled out but before the 1st cycle of the Developmental Review, should they be included for the initial reviewer/ee training?

Yes, as long as they do not complete their Developmental Review until their probation has been successfully completed. However, further workshops will be provided for new staff members who join during cycle 1 and those who come out of probation during cycle 1.

8. If I am engaged in an informal or formal process under the Grievance Procedure or the Disciplinary Statute, should I participate in a Developmental Review?

Participation in the Developmental Review Process may be paused and/or deferred if the participant is engaged in a simultaneous informal or formal process under the provisions of one of the University's HR policies, such as the Grievance Procedure or the Disciplinary Statute. In such circumstances, pausing and/or deferral will be permitted on the basis that participation will resume once the simultaneous/parallel engagement has been completed. All such cases will be treated on a case-by-case basis, and in each case the decision to pause and/or defer participation will be recorded.

9. If I complete my probation after the review cycle has started, can I commence my review immediately or do I have to wait for the next review cycle?

You can commence your review when you have completed your probation. However, if your probation is successfully completed towards the end of the review cycle, it might be best to wait until the new review cycle begins. This can be discussed and agreed with your manager/Head of Unit.

10. Do employees on secondment need to be reviewed?

Yes, they should be reviewed by the person who is their assigned reviewer within the area they are seconded to. When they return to their substantive post, they will complete their review with the assigned reviewer in that area to set new objectives for that position.

11. If I have 1 year remaining on my contract when the Review Cycle commences should I participate?

Yes. If you have 1 year remaining on your contract you should participate as you will have objectives and development to discuss and agree.

12. I will be retiring soon, does the Development Review apply to me?

The scope of the framework includes all staff who have at least one year left from when their review is due to commence. Depending on when you plan to retire, you could still participate in the Developmental Review. Staff who are reaching retirement within the review cycle can discuss development they may find supportive in preparing for retirement, a handover and supports they may require as they prepare to leave their role.

13. If I was part of the pilot for this process (P&DR) should I use my P&DR form for my first Developmental Review meeting?

The framework has been updated and changes have been made to Form 1 since the pilot. There will be a gap since the pilot was completed and the Developmental Review process begins, and the information may now be out of date. However, if the Reviewee finds it useful to use the information from the pilot to aid the discussion as part of the Developmental Review meeting, they can do so but it is not required as part of the DR process.

Reviewer and Reviewee Roles

14. What happens if a reviewee changes role in the same department during the Review Cycle?

- a) *If a reviewee has the same reviewer but a new role, the Reviewer will have access to the previous Developmental Review form. A Developmental Review meeting should be scheduled between the Reviewee and the Reviewer, to discuss development opportunities, set goals, objectives and actions for the new role. The previous form no longer needs to be retained by the Reviewer as the new role will have new goals which are now documented.*

- b) *If the Reviewee has a new reviewer due to this change, they should meet with them to complete their Developmental Review for the new role and to discuss development opportunities, set goals, objectives and actions for the new role.*

The Reviewee may discuss their previous review with the new reviewer, if they feel it will be relevant and useful to the discussion. However, the new reviewer will not have a copy of the previous Developmental Review form, as that was only relevant to the previous role and that reviewer/reviewee relationship.

The previous reviewer should delete the Developmental Review Form of this staff member as they no longer report to them or support them in their role.

15. What happens if a reviewee moves department during the Review Cycle?

The Reviewee should be assigned a new reviewer in the new department. A Developmental Review meeting should be scheduled between the Reviewee and the Reviewer.

The new reviewer will not have a copy of the previous review. The previous reviewer should delete the Developmental Review Form of this staff member as they no longer report to them or support them in their role.

16. What happens if the Reviewer changes during the Review Cycle?

If your reviewer no longer works in that area, and is therefore no longer a reviewer for the people they previously reviewed, they will share the Developmental Review forms for that DR cycle with the new assigned reviewer that the reviewees have been informed is assigned to them.

The previous reviewer should delete the Developmental Review Form for their previous reviewees, as they no longer report to them or support them in their role.

Should a conflict of interest arise during the Review Cycle this should be raised with the Head of Unit or UE member. See Q18. Below.

17. If there is a new Head of Department, do they have access to the development requests from the previous cycle?

Yes, the new Head of Department will have access to a list of reviews completed in the last review cycle and to the development supports requested and agreed at that time by the previous Head of Department, from the Form 2's.

The previous Head of Department should delete documentation relating to the Developmental Review process that they required during their time as Head as they are no longer in the role as Head.

A Head of Department will not have access to the Developmental Review Form for people they did not review.

A former Head may still remain as reviewer to colleagues in the department and anyone they are no longer a reviewer for they should follow the steps in Q14. above.

18. How are reviewers nominated and assigned?

Reviewer: shall be understood to mean an individual to whom the staff member is assigned to for the purposes of the Developmental Review. This is normally the immediate Manager (in some cases the Head of Department/Institute/School/Unit) of the Reviewee.

The University Executive (UE) member is responsible for acting as the Reviewer for the Head of Department/School/Institute/Unit (their direct reports).

The Head of Department is responsible for nominating and assigning reviewers.

In admin and support departments the Reviewer should be the person who the Reviewee reports to and who sets their work goals and objectives.

In some Departments where the Head is the manager for many of the staff in the Department, the Head may have too many reviewees for this process to be effective. In these cases, the Head will nominate a team of *reviewers* who can most contribute to the Reviewees work and will have delegated authority to carry out the review. Consideration should be given to all reviewers in their area and subunits. In an academic department, these may include a Deputy Head, Subject Leads and Professors.

It is suggested the optimum ratio is somewhere between 8 to 12 reviewees per reviewer. However, this is not a rule, and flexibility exists for Heads of Unit to use their judgement and discretion.

A reviewer will not be assigned to a reviewee where there is a *known* conflict of interest e.g. a close relationship, or a known conflict/dispute between both parties.

In the case where there is a perceived conflict the Reviewer or Reviewee should inform the relevant Head of Unit or University Executive member to seek advice.

19. I work across two different areas, a Department and an Institute. Who should complete my review?

If you work across different departments/units/institutes and you have objectives for both areas, you will need to discuss with your assigned reviewers for each area and agree how the review meeting should be conducted.

For example, you could have both reviewers present at the same meeting and complete a joint review.

Alternatively, you could complete a review for one area (with Reviewer 1) including your career development discussion and complement with a review from the other area (with Reviewer 2), focused solely on objectives. It may help to think in terms of your allocated working time to each area to decide where to place your career development conversation.

20. I am a Reviewer for a Department and an Institute. Can I be a Reviewer in two different areas?

If you have been nominated as a reviewer for different areas, you can complete the reviews with your assigned reviewees in each of those areas. It is suggested the optimum ratio is somewhere between 8 to 12 reviewees per reviewer.

21. What happens if there is a conflict of interest between a reviewer and a reviewee?

A conflict of interest is a set of circumstances, relationships or events that could impact on the objectivity of the Review, for example through a family relationship, through marriage (civil or common law) or civil partnership, through any romantic or sexual relationship, current or past, or through any serious personal or professional conflict with the Reviewee.

Where a conflict of interest occurs, the Head of Department may assign an Alternate Reviewer.

22. Can I request an Alternate Reviewer?

Any requests for an Alternate Reviewer should be discussed with the Head of Department or UE member in the case where the assigned reviewer is the Head of Department.

23. What is the Reviewer's role in review?

The role of the Reviewer is to provide guidance and support to the Reviewee on their career development, their objective setting and acknowledge their contributions. They should also engage actively in the process with the Reviewee.

24. What is the Reviewee's role in the Review?

The role of the Reviewee is to reflect on their career and development requirements, objectives and contributions to the University over the past 24 months and for the coming review period. They should engage actively in the process with the Reviewer. The Reviewee should agree clear and relevant goals and objectives, identify any challenges which may impact on achieving the goals and objectives, and discuss solutions to such challenges. The Reviewee should also participate in approved development supports they were approved to participate in.

25. How many reviewees should a reviewer have?

It is suggested that the optimum ratio is somewhere between 8 to 12 reviewees per reviewer. However, this is not a rule, and flexibility exists for Heads to use their judgement and discretion.

Workshops on the Developmental Review framework

26. What training will reviewers receive as part of preparing for the Developmental Review process?

Reviewers will be invited to a workshop by Learning and Development, HR. A webpage of supporting documents is available for staff to access. Reviewers can access support and ask questions by contacting dr@mu.ie.

There are additional development programmes on relevant competencies related to being part of the Developmental Review process, available throughout the year. Please view the [Learning & Development Directory](#) for further information. These supports are also listed in the Developmental Review Guidelines.

27. What training will reviewees receive as part of preparing for the Developmental Review process?

Reviewees will be invited to a workshop by Learning and Development, HR. A webpage of supporting documents is available for staff to access. Reviewees can access support and ask questions by contacting dr@mu.ie.

There are additional development programmes on relevant competencies related to the being part of the Developmental Review process, available throughout the year. Please view the [Learning & Development Directory](#) for further information. These supports are also listed in the Developmental Review Guidelines.

28. I am a reviewer. Do I need to complete both reviewer and reviewee training?

No. Reviewers will only need to complete the *Developmental Review Reviewer Workshop*, as this will cover what they need to know as a reviewer and as a reviewee.

Reviewees only complete *Developmental Review Reviewee Workshop* if they are only reviewees (not reviewers)

29. If I was part of the pilot for this process (P&DR) do I still need to attend this training?

Yes, the review process has been updated to reflect the feedback from the pilot and further consultations held since its conclusion. Both Reviewer and Reviewee workshops have been designed incorporating the final version of the Development Review framework.

30. How long is the Reviewer and Reviewee Workshop?

Each workshop is approximately 3 hours. It is available as a live on campus workshop or online

There will be a selection of dates for staff to choose from.

31. If someone I wish to nominate as a reviewer is on probation, can they still be a reviewer?

Yes, if they are a suitable reviewer or have direct reports.

32. As a Head of Department should I let the colleagues I am nominating as reviewers know I have nominated them?

Yes, please do.

All staff must complete a reviewer or reviewee workshop before participating in the Developmental Review framework.

Review Cycle and Forms

33. When does the Developmental Review Cycle commence?

The Developmental Review Meeting should take place between 1st February and 30th April.

The mid - review meeting takes place between 1st February and 30th April of the following year.

The cycle begins again the year after. It is a 2-year cycle of continuous check-ins.

New staff can have their review scheduled at a suitable time during the 2 year cycle, when they have successfully completed their probation (reviewees) and have completed the reviewee or reviewer workshop (available throughout the year).

34. How many meetings are involved in the Review Cycle?

The review cycle consists of two formal meetings between the Reviewer and the Reviewee:

1. At the start of the cycle, the Developmental Review meeting takes place, where goals and objectives are outlined and development supports are identified and agreed.
2. The Mid-Review meeting takes place within 12 months of setting objectives and defining development needs to discuss how the objectives are progressing and if there are any changes to be made to what was previously agreed.

Regular check-in meetings and conversations are recommended throughout the two-year cycle.

35. How long should a Review Meeting be?

The duration of each meeting will be decided on by the Reviewee and Reviewer depending on what is being discussed. It is recommended each meeting takes approximately 45 – 60 minutes. The quality of the conversation is what is important.

The Reviewer must provide at least 10 working days' notice of the meeting to allow the Reviewee time to prepare.

36. Where should the review meeting take place?

A neutral, accessible and suitable location is recommended, somewhere where a confidential conversation can take place undisturbed. It is recommended the meeting takes place in person where both parties can talk confidentiality and without distraction.

37. Do I need to bring someone to the DR meeting with me?

The meeting is confidential between the Reviewer and the Reviewee and there is no requirement to bring anyone else to the meeting by either party.

38. What comes under development in the Developmental Review discussion?

Development can be viewed as a process that results in growth, progress and positive change. Development should focus on the Reviewee's career goals and the supports they require to meet the objectives agreed under the Framework. Development should be thought of in its broadest terms. Development includes delegation of work activities supported by mentoring, coaching, on the job training, shadowing, knowledge sharing etc. In fact, any situation in which an individual learns. The way an individual learns is personal to them and this should be considered when agreeing development objectives. A **Development Objective** is an agreed action, which will help you to improve the competencies you identified as relevant to your job.

A useful model is the 70:20:10 Development Model, whereby 70% of development is typically achieved through experiential learning such as new challenges, projects, special assignments, committee membership, problem solving, reflective practice, learning through doing. 20% is typically through social learning such as mentoring, coaching, communities of practice, knowledge sharing, feedback and networking. 10% is typically through formal learning such as academic qualifications, short courses, e-learning and structured programmes.

39. If this is my first review, do I have to complete the *Reflection Section* (Part 2) of Form 1 on reflection?

This is only applicable where a review has been completed previously in MU. As this is a new process it will not be necessary to complete this for Cycle 1. However, you may find it useful to reflect and complete this section, based on your role.

40. How many goals should I list in my review form?

The number of goals you have will depend on your role. However, it is suggested that a maximum of 5 goals are required.

41. Should the Developmental Review Form 1 be completed during or after the review meeting?

It may be helpful for the Reviewee and Reviewer to reflect on Part 2 and Part 3 of the *Developmental Review Form* (Form 1) in advance of the meeting taking place.

The key is to have a quality conversation between the Reviewer and Reviewee. If there are elements of the form that have been discussed but not finalised during the meeting these can be completed post meeting. It is recommended that the form is completed within 1 week of the meeting while the conversation is still fresh by the Reviewee and shared with the Reviewer for signing and to retain until the next review cycle.

42. Who has access to the Developmental Review Form 1?

Form 1 is confidential between the Reviewer and Reviewee.

The development requests are shared with the Head when there is a budgetary requirement or if the impact of the development requires discussion with the Head (on Form 2).

43. I don't have a Maynooth University email, how do I send the form to my Reviewer?

If you do not have a Maynooth University email, please agree with your reviewer the most confidential way to send the form to them.

44. How long are the forms associated with the Developmental Reviews retained?

The documentation associated with the Developmental Review shall be processed in accordance with data protection legislation and stored in accordance with the University's Records Retention Schedules¹.

All information, except individual development needs that have a budgetary impact or where the impact of the development requires discussion with the Head of Department for approval, recorded on the *Developmental Review Form 1*, is confidential to the Reviewee and Reviewer. The Reviewer will ensure that no third party can access Form 1.

¹ <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/data-protection/personal-data-retention-schedules>

The documentation² created in relation to the Developmental Review framework shall be processed and stored locally on the University's OneDrive by the Reviewer until the next developmental review meeting has taken place as part of the following cycle, to facilitate the subsequent review meeting. After which it will be confidentially destroyed in accordance with the University's Records Retention Schedules.

Any hard copies of the Reviewee's forms should be confidentially shredded as soon as the review has been recorded on the online version of the form and saved.

The Reviewee may retain their completed forms for as long as they remain employed by Maynooth University, forming a record of their career development.

45. Who decides what the goals and objectives are?

Goals and objectives are discussed and agreed with the Reviewer during the review meeting.

46. What happens if the Reviewer and Reviewee do not agree on goals, objectives and development support requirements?

If agreement regarding the setting and achieving of goals and objectives cannot be reached during the meeting, the meeting should be rescheduled for a later date (within a week). This will allow both parties time to reconsider their options.

If, following the rescheduled meeting, agreement still cannot be reached, the Reviewee should put the reason for the non-agreement in writing to the Head of Department (if they are not the Reviewer) or to the relevant member of the University Executive.

47. When should I complete the training agreed as part of my review?

Approved development supports as identified during your review should be carried out during your assigned/typical working hours. If you are unable to complete approved training during your assigned working hours, please discuss with your manager/Head around what alternative arrangements could be made. There are a variety of training methods available including e-learning courses and live on campus and live online training.

Agreed development should be completed within the review cycle and a timeframe can be discussed at your review to ensure the development supports are prioritised.

For approved further education, you should refer to the associated university policies:

- [Education Support Policy](#)
- [Education Support, Study Leave and Exam Leave Policy FAQs](#)
- [Study and Examination Leave Policy](#)

² After feedback from the first cycle has been considered, a suitable online system will be investigated.

48. What statistics will be compiled during the review cycle and who will they be shared with?

HR will request a list of all reviews completed in each department at the end of the review cycle and will co-ordinate the statistics on Reviews completed. These will be shared with UE members as part of the overall University-wide Developmental Review update.

General Questions

49. I am a reviewer and have submitted development requirements for my reviewee(s) to my Head of Department. How and when will I hear about what has been approved?

It is only development actions that have a budget requirement or require the input of the Head of Unit should be shared with the Head. The Head of Unit will review all requests submitted by all their reviewers and communicate the outcome back to the Reviewer as soon as practicable following the end of the objective setting period.

All other development actions agreed at the meeting and noted on Form 1 should be actioned by the Reviewee within the timeframe agreed.

50. Which budget will cover the costs of agreed development supports?

Any job specific or department specific development requirements should be supported by the Department non-pay budget. Value for money should always be sought.

All other development supports should be booked through the relevant internal provider such as Learning and Development. Please view the [Learning & Development Directory](#) for information on development supports available and contact the areas in the University that provide these supports to recommend development supports that are not currently offered, which they may be able to support you with.

51. Is the Development Review Framework used for promotion purposes?

The Developmental Review Framework is not used for promotion purposes.

It is recommended that Maynooth University [promotion criteria](#) are used to support the discussions for reviews involving academic staff.

For admin, professional technical and support staff competencies required for promotion opportunities should be discussed.

52. What, if any, connection does the Developmental Review have to discipline or underperformance issues?

The Developmental Review is **not** for dealing with underperformance issues and is not used in conjunction with disciplinary procedures. It is not an appropriate forum to address disciplinary matters, raise grievances or lodge complaints. There are alternative processes in place to support these. Please talk to your Head of Department or HR to discuss these processes further.

53. Will this require additional work for staff?

While initially there may be some concern regarding additional work, in the long run this will result in improved efficiencies and more effective ways of working for all involved. The simple act of having a conversation between reviewer and reviewee on their objectives, development goals etc. has the potential to improve communication and engagement as well as overall employee wellbeing.

54. How does the Workload Allocation Model or Work Plans fit with the Developmental Review?

The Developmental Review framework is formally a separate process from the Workload Allocation Models (WLAM) and Department Work Plans.

However, as the Developmental Review framework agrees work goals it may be helpful to keep the agreed Workload Allocation Model and/or Work Plans for the Department in mind to provide context for the objective setting. They may be a useful reference for conversation regarding planning and agreeing priorities.

55. I have applied to complete a qualification through the Education Support policy before the first Developmental Review Cycle. Will the DR process impact that application?

If this has already been approved by your Head of Department/nominee at the time of application it will be then subject to consideration by the Educational Support Committee in accordance with the policy. All future discussions on courses that could be supported under Education Support policy should be discussed at your Developmental Review.

56. Is the DR documentation available in Irish?

Form 1 and Form 2 have been translated into Irish and are available on the [DR webpage](#). Any other related documentation that a staff member would like to access in Irish please email dr@mu.ie.

The Forms relating to Developmental Review are available in Irish on request – Tá na Foirmeacha don Athbhreithniú Forbartha ar fáil i nGaeilge ach iad a iarraidh.

57. Where can I access further information on the Developmental Review process?

- Dedicated Developmental Review webpage (<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/human-resources/developmental-review>)
- Contact: dr@mu.ie