



Queen Margaret University  
EDINBURGH

# Performance Enhancement Review Policy and Procedure

<b>Policy Summary:</b>	The Performance Enhancement Review Policy and Procedure provides a tool to develop a shared understanding about what is to be achieved by the University and the process for PER.
<b>Policy Owner:</b>	Human Resources
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**Appendix 1:** Performance Enhancement Review (PER) Form

## 1.0 Principles

QMU's Performance Enhancement Review (PER) is one essential tool that helps to make up the University's approach to performance management. The Performance Enhancement Review replaces the Activity Planning process.

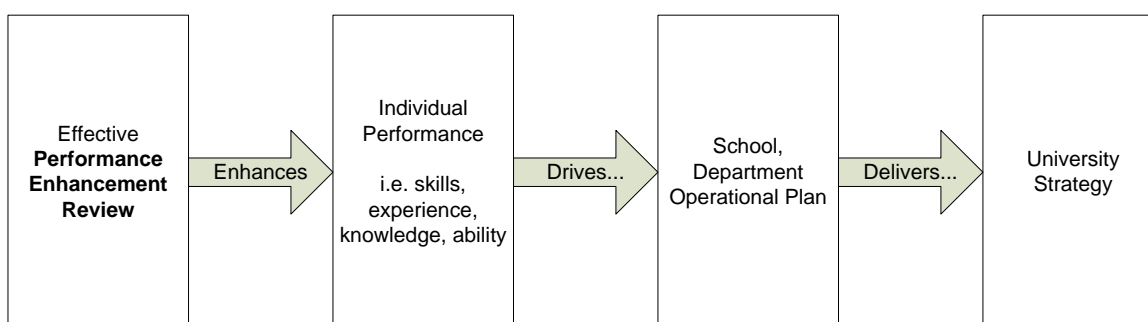
QMU adopts a holistic approach to performance management. Performance enhancement is considered a dynamic activity led by employees in interaction with supportive managers, and as such an 'entitlement approach' is taken. Every employee is expected to seek to enhance the quality of their work and are entitled to access the appropriate processes and support which they need to achieve this up to the level outlined in this policy. At the same time, QMU has an expectation that employees will contribute to, and participate in, the strategic objectives of the University which may, from time to time, vary. The PER is offered as a mechanism to facilitate both these objectives, by providing a consistent process across the University which all employees are entitled to access through their line manager, and which may be adapted as appropriate to the needs of the employee in pursuit of enhancing their performance.

Whilst some employee may choose not to access their entitlement to a PER, all employees will be given a set of objectives which are in accordance with the role they perform and their job description.

## 2.0 Aims and Objectives

The overall aim of performance management is to develop a shared understanding about what is to be achieved by the University. This shared understanding supports the approach that is taken toward areas such as leadership and staff development. The aim is to ensure such approaches locally align to support the institutional direction.

Performance management, including Performance Enhancement Review, is a process that contributes to the effective management of individuals and their School/Departments. Overall this helps shape the performance of the University – see below.



The focus of performance management at QMU is about ensuring the appropriate structures, support and opportunities are in place and that they combine to achieve the University strategy.

As part of the overall enhancement of University performance, the specific aims of PER are to:

- Discuss the Operational Plan, linking to the individual's role and activities and clarifying the individual's contribution to the Operational Plan
- Create a shared understanding of the role
- Help to prioritise workload and objectives effectively
- Provide feedback on performance and agree the level of performance expected
- Provide the opportunity to discuss career aspirations

In many areas, the organisation and allocation of work and accountability for enhancing performance is best performed collectively, in which case a team-based approach to the PER would be encouraged. It is likely that effective teamwork will lead to clarity of role and enhanced performance of strategic and operational objectives, both individually and collectively. This approach, however, does not negate the entitlement of individual employees for access to PER, and the Line Manager should ensure that, following team processes, a private and personal PER meeting with each team member is available. This aims to ensure the individual has the same opportunity as all others across the University, in terms of the aims of the PER meeting.

### **3.0 Scope of the Policy**

This policy applies to staff who are employed by Queen Margaret University on a substantive post. A substantive post is a post which is defined in the University core staffing structure. The policy does not apply to staff who are within their probationary period.

### **4.0 Data Protection**

All information gathered on individuals as part of this policy will be processed in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act.

### **5.0 Induction, Learning and Development**

HR offer training, advice, support, guidance and coaching for all staff involved in the implementation and application of this policy. The aim of this development is to provide awareness of Institutional policy and best practice, the legislative framework, including equal opportunities, and to enhance skills in managing and participating in the implementation and application of this policy.

### **6.0 Equal Opportunities**

The University is committed to equality of opportunity for all staff. It is the responsibility of all employees to promote "equality and diversity" in the application of the PER, ensuring that there is no discrimination on the grounds of the protected equality characteristics<sup>1</sup>.

### **7.0 Responsibility for this Policy**

Human Resources is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of this policy and will review this policy as required. Any changes to this policy and supporting procedures will

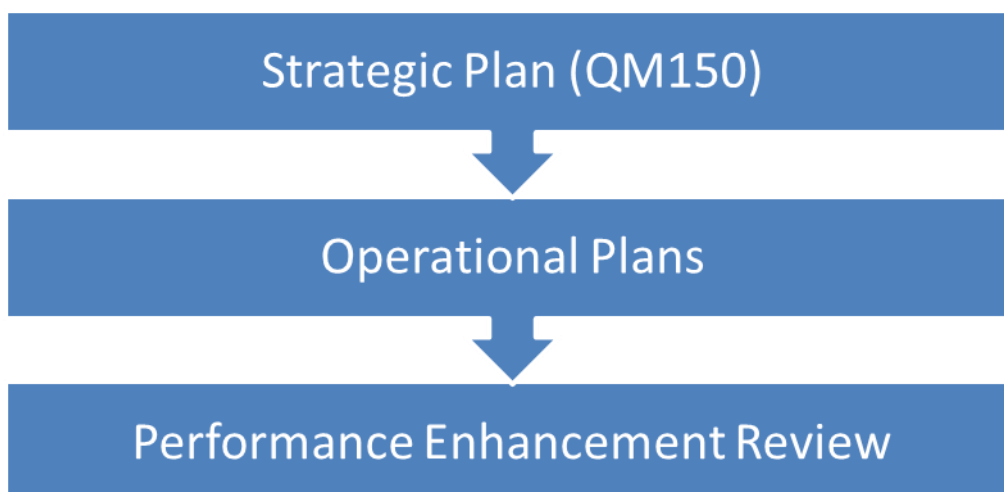
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<sup>1</sup> The Equality Act 2010 states the protected equality strands as age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage/ civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

be made in consultation with appropriate bodies. QMU reserves the right to update HR Policies and procedures in line with new or updated employment legislation.

## 8.0 PER and the University's Planning Process

The Performance Enhancement Review is a fundamental element of the University's planning process. The PER process provides the interface between the Strategic Plan and all staff. It aligns the objectives developed in the University's Strategic Plan and Operational Plans with individual objectives of all staff and their professional development. This is displayed below:



## 9.00 Objective Setting and Performance Levels

### Objective Setting

Individual objectives can be expressed as:

- targets to be achieved, or,
- activities to be completed by a specified date.

Objectives should be directly work-related (referring to job results to be achieved). It should be clearly defined and agreed and relate to all the various aspects of the job that contribute to achieving the role purpose.

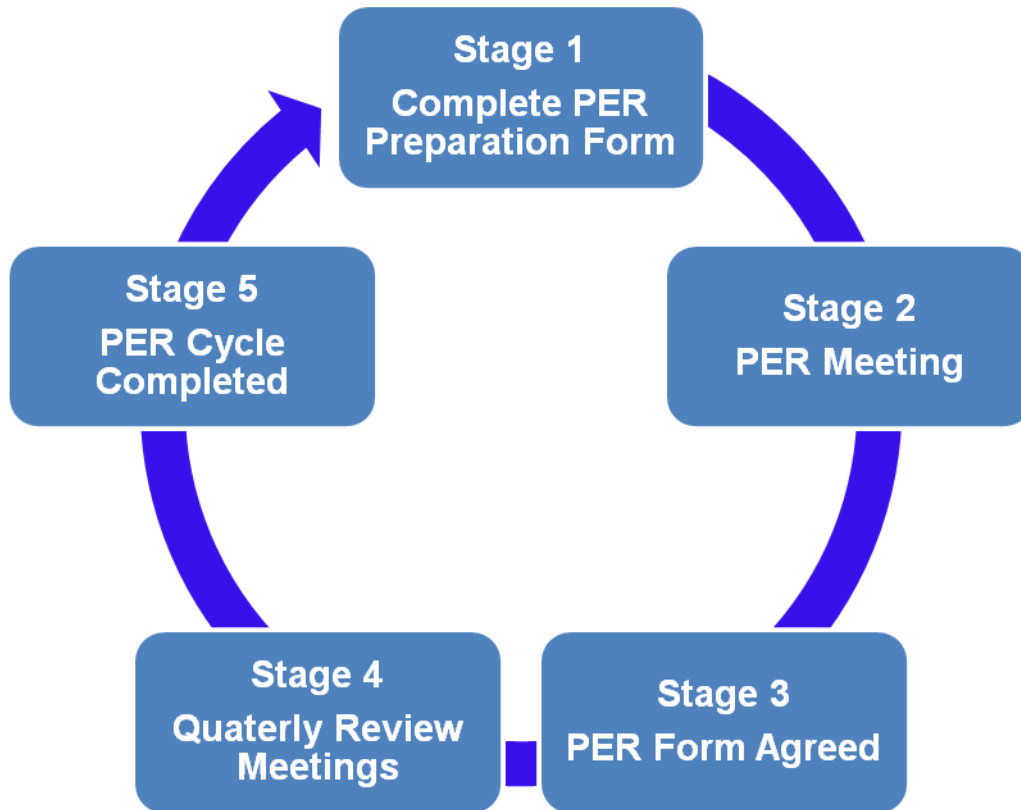
### Performance Level

Performance levels sit alongside objectives. It is recognised that individuals may perform at different levels. For example new members of staff will be likely to contribute at a different level to that of a more experienced member of staff. The skilled Line Manager recognises this and applies this understanding to create an effective PER: tailoring conversations and agreeing developmental objectives/career plans to the position, abilities and aspirations of the individual.

For an objective to be managed effectively, individuals and Line Managers must know and agree the basis on which performance will be measured.

## 10.0 The Procedure

The remainder of this document looks specifically at the PER procedure and specifically, at stages that make up the Performance Enhancement Review. Although a continuous process, the Performance Enhancement Review is underpinned by five main stages. The aim is to create and maintain a virtuous circle of individual and organisational development.



The five stages are supported by associated Performance Enhancement Review documentation. These are summarised in the table below.

<u>Stage</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Supporting Form</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>
1	PER Meeting Preparation	PER Form  (inc Objectives and Continuous Professional Development)	Employee and Line Manager
2	Hold PER Meeting		Employee and Line Manager
3	Agree PER Form		
4	Review Meeting		
5	PER Cycle Completed		

## **10.01 Stage 1 Performance Enhancement Review: Meeting Preparation**

The aim of this stage is to encourage both the individual and the Line Manager to reflect on the progress of activities/projects and to consider possible future professional development options. To ensure an effective PER process the employee must be fully familiar with the operational plan for their School/department, and how their role contributes to it.

Prior to the PER Meeting, the Line Manager and the member of staff should complete Section 1 of the 'PER Form'.

The employee should email their completed form to their Line Manager a few days prior to the PER meeting.

Both the employee and Line Manager should take time before the PER meeting to prepare for the meeting. This helps to inform the individual PER conversations to ensure a productive meeting. Preparation activities are not passive and both the Line Manager and the employee should undertake a number of activities prior to the PER meeting.

Ideally, the employee should:

- Identify their achievements during the period
- Describe objectives where challenges and obstructions were experienced
- Identify what they enjoy about the work and how they might want to develop themselves and the role
- Identify any areas of the work where improvement is needed – with ideas as to how this might be achieved
- Identify learning and development needs and aspirations
- Discuss the level of support, coaching and guidance required from the Line Manager
- Identify aspirations for the future - both in the current role and in possible future roles
- Draft objectives for the PER period (from the reviewed Operational Plan and team / department initiatives)

The Line Manager should consider:

- how well the individual has performed since the last meeting
- the extent to which any agreed development planning (from the last meeting, where possible) has been implemented
- the feedback to be given at the meeting supported by meaningful examples
- the factors that have affected performance, both within and outside the individual's control
- the points for discussion on the possible actions that could be taken by both parties to develop or improve performance
- potential directions the individual's career or job might take

## **10.02 Stage 2 – The Performance Enhancement Review Meeting**

The PER meeting is a private and personal conversation between the individual and the Line Manager. The aim of the PER meeting is to ensure the member of staff:

- knows and understands what is expected of them
- is given feedback on their performance
- has the opportunity to discuss, contribute to and agree objectives
- is supported to develop their capability (skills, experience to achieve the expectations/performance objectives)

### **Agree the way forward**

The Line Manager and the employee should discuss and agree the best approach to PER. In some cases a more frequent schedule of PER meetings may be desired, in other instances, particularly when longer term objectives are being agreed, a less frequent review period may be preferred. Meetings may also take place outside the PER schedule to discuss performance related issues e.g. if the employee requires assistance or additional resource to achieve an objective, these meetings should be arranged as and when required.

### **PER Agreement**

The Line Manager and the employee should discuss and agree the best approach to performance enhancement. In some cases employees' performance enhancement and professional development is best achieved through mentoring, networking, collegiate discussion or personal reflection. At other times a more or less frequent PER is more appropriate. To this end, the employees should indicate to the Line Manager the level of intervention most appropriate to their own professional development and performance enhancement and should agree to abide by this level of support. For example, a PER agreement might include:

- Regular PER meetings plus access to manager for additional support;
- Annual PERs;
- mentorship from other individuals;
- access to networking opportunities;
- team discussion as the primary source of performance enhancement.

PER conversations are discussions that focus on future direction of the individual. The aim is to link the focus and direction of the University with the individual's abilities and career aspirations.

The PER process is a continuous development process, however all formal PER meetings should commence at the start of each academic year in September. They should be completed by the end of November annually with the first Review Meeting planned for a date between December to February. However it may be agreed that the review meeting will take place when either the manager or the employee feels they would be useful.

An effective PER meeting is one in which:

- the meeting is positive, motivational with agreed objectives that sustain and enhance future performance;
- achievement is recognised and reinforced;
- there is an opportunity for analysis and for reflection.



## **PER Form**

Supporting the PER meeting and process is one PER form. This consists of 5 sections:

### **Section 1: Current Performance**

This section is a free text box to outline key areas of the job and include an update summary of the achievements to date. This may include challenges experienced in achieving any objectives.

In the first year of the PER taking place, this section should capture the work targets or objectives set to the date of the first PER. As the PER develops over the years, this section should link to the previous years set objectives and provide an update on their progress.

This section should be completed prior to the PER meeting by the employee.

### **Section 2: Current Objectives**

<b><u>Column</u></b>	<b><u>What this Means</u></b>
Performance Objective	For each row, one specific and realistic objective is stated per line that relates to the current operational plan or team initiatives.
Operational Plan Reference	This section relates to the Operational Plan Reference No that is located on the Operational Plan.
Completion Date	This section outlines the planned completion date and can be broken into long term and shorter term dates.
Review No 1, 2 and 3	These are related to the update meetings that should take place over the course of the year. The aim is to capture progress and updates. Review dates can be set during the PER Agreement discussion, a suggested timetable for review is below

Mtg No 1	Between December to February
Mtg No 2	Between March to May
Mtg No 3	Between June to August

### **Section 3: Development and Training**

The Continuous Professional Development plan is an integral part of the PER process. The objectives aim to align with the individual's professional development, where possible. Continuous Professional Development planning is designed to help managers and staff plan activities to support attainment of agreed objectives and to help plan long-term career, personal and professional goals. Having completed the discussion on performance objectives, the member of staff and their manager should discuss and document personal development aims and objectives. This section has 3 columns to complete:

<u>Column</u>	<u>What this Means</u>
Development Objective	What is the specific development/learning required. This development should support the delivery of the objectives identified. What are the essential actions that you personally need to do to make this development happen
Resources Needed	What resource or support will you need to achieve the development? How you will know when you have achieved the development/learning needed
Target Date/s	By when do you need this development?

#### **Section 4: Career Planning**

A free text box that aims to capture thoughts on overall career or job aspirations.

#### **Section 5: Other Areas of Discussion**

A free text box that provides the opportunity to include any other aspects the employee wishes to discuss.

Following on from the meeting, the employee completes the draft objectives and supporting development plan. This should then be emailed to the Line Manager within 2 weeks of the PER meeting. It is important that the employee factors in time to make this happen.

It is expected that some members of staff may need support in drafting their PER and, as well as Line Manager guidance and support, a number of PER information sessions will take place through the calendar year (provided by HR) to support individuals to complete the PER. You can also contact HR for more information and support.

### **10.03 Stage 3 – Agreeing the Performance Enhancement Review Form**

Once the employee has revised the PER this is returned to the Line Manager. The Line Manager reviews the revision to ensure:

- Each objective is SMART<sup>2</sup>
- The overall number of objectives are realistic
- The drafted objectives provide opportunity for enhanced performance and the development of skills and experience
- The professional development plan aligns with the stated objectives

The Line Manager's role is to support the employee to finalise the PER. If any changes are required this should be agreed in discussion with the individual.

The Line Manager must ensure the objectives relate to Operational Plan.

Targets may not necessarily be numerically quantifiable. Quality is as important as quantity and it will be important, in some instances, to build quality-related considerations into the objectives.

As a rough guide, the PER should detail about four or five performance objectives, however the emphasis is on realism and feasibility of what is achievable and what can be

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<sup>2</sup> Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time bound

supported to be delivered. The PER form should capture the agreed dates for the Review Meeting.

#### **10.04 Stage 4 –Review Meetings**

To be truly effective, the PER should be accompanied by Review Meetings. However it may be agreed that the review meeting will take place when either the manager or the employee feels they would be useful as described in PER arrangements.

The aim of the Review Meeting is to:

- provide time for progress updates
- identify what is going well
- jointly problem-solve objectives that may have become ‘stuck’
- ensure the performance objectives remain ‘live’
- provide an update on School/Department direction and allow for a re-prioritisation of objectives

The Review Meeting outcomes should always be captured in writing, particularly where this has led to a change in objectives/CPD. The employee is responsible for documenting the key points from the Review Meeting.

It is important to note that both the individual and Line Manager are jointly responsible for following through on objectives agreed during the PER. Therefore essential management activities such as ongoing coaching and feedback in between meetings are essential. Managers are a fundamental source of support and facilitation in helping their team achieve their goals. Increasingly evidence demonstrates the positive contribution that a coaching approach adopted by the Line Manager can make on enhancing development.

#### **10.05 Stage 5 – PER Cycle Completed**

The complete PER cycle takes one full year. It starts in September annually and runs through to the end of August. It is split into 4 sessions, this may be varied according to PER agreements:

<b>Quarter</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>When</b>
1	PER Meeting	Sept, Oct, Nov
2	Review Meeting No 1	Dec, Jan, Feb
3	Review Meeting No 2	Mar, Apr, May
4	Review Meeting No 3	Jun, Jul, Aug

A new PER cycle will commence in September annually.

### **11.0 School/Department Learning and Development Plan**

From August 2011 the University Learning and Development budget will be decentralised to Dean/Director level. The Dean/Director is responsible for ensuring the allocation of this budget to staff development and also for delegating this responsibility to Head/Manager, when appropriate. School/Department Learning and Development Plans will be discussed at the monthly HR meeting.

The development information will be collated centrally in HR to inform University Staff Learning and Development Reporting.

### **12.0 Performance Enhancement Review: Roles and Responsibilities**

Deans/Directors are responsible for the effective implementation of PER across their Schools/Departments. It is likely and expected that the PER process is cascaded through the School/Department in line with Operational Planning requirements. Deans/Directors are responsible for collating PER information and progress and informing monthly HR meetings.

Individual members of staff are responsible for positively engaging in the process, preparing for review meetings, contributing during the meetings and drafting the PER.

Human Resources are responsible for supporting managers in the implementation of the PER and for the on-going development of the policy. HR will also provide guidance, coaching and development solutions for both staff and line managers. HR is responsible for producing progress reports for senior managers.

### **13.0 Performance Enhancement Review and Unsatisfactory Performance**

The PER process is not designed to address ongoing unsatisfactory performance. Unsatisfactory performance is defined as a level of performance that does not meet the required standard expected of the employee. Unsatisfactory performance needs to be addressed as soon as it is identified and The Management of Performance Policy will provide further guidance.

### **14.0 Non-Agreement of the Performance Enhancement Review Plan**

The PER process aims to provide an opportunity for the Line Manager and individual to discuss, agree and prioritise the objectives and CPD. In the event of the Line Manager and individual being unable to agree the next Senior Manager should be consulted in the first instance. This Senior Manager will aim to reach agreement on the plan.

However, in the event that this Senior Manager is unable to reach agreement, the next senior manager will review the PER form in conjunction with all the parties. This may include support from Human Resources.

In the event of a member of staff concerned that they are being unfairly treated over any aspect of the PER process they should contact HR for guidance.

**Name:**

**Job Title:**

**Line Manager/Reviewer:**

**School/Department:**

**Section One: Current Performance**

This section should be used to record key areas of your job, including an update of summary achievements to date. You may also wish to consider any challenges you have experienced in delivering your objectives.

**Section Two: Current Objectives**

(normally four or five objectives are adequate)

Section Two: Current Objectives (normally four or five objectives are adequate)	Operational Plan Reference No.	Start Date	Review 1 Progress	Review 2 Progress	Review 3 Progress	Review 4 Progress
1. Meet the objectives described in the job description for the role						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						
6.						

<b>Section Three: Development and Training Requirements</b>		
Development Objectives	How will this be achieved? What will you need to do? What resources will be required?	Target Date
1.		
2.		
3.		

<b>Section Four: Your Career</b>
What are your career aspirations? What do you need to achieve this? How are you going to make this happen?

<b>Section Five: Other Areas of Discussion</b>
This section should be used to record any other points for discussion at the PER meeting.

<b>Review points agreed:</b>	<b>Review point 1:</b>
	<b>Review point 2:</b>
	<b>Review point 3:</b>
	<b>Review point 4:</b>

<b>Employee Signature:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Line Manager/Reviewer Signature:</b>	<b>Date:</b>

