



Transforming Lives
EDUCATIONAL TRUST

Appraisal Policy

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1 – Scope

- 1.1 This policy applies to all staff across the Transforming Lives Educational Trust, including Teaching Assistants and Support Staff (where applicable) in the absence of a national agreement on appraisal for these employees.
- 1.2 This policy aims to set out the parameters in which the performance of staff is supported and measured on an annual basis.
- 1.3 Relevant union representatives have reviewed this policy.
- 1.4 The policy and its associated procedures apply to the aforementioned staff employed by the academy except:
 - teachers on contracts of less than one term
 - those undergoing statutory induction (i.e. NQTs) or
 - those who are the subject of capability procedures.

2 – Policy Statement

- 2.1 This policy sets out the framework for a clear and consistent assessment of an individual's overall performance and for supporting their development within the context of the Trust's plan for improving educational provision and performance, and the standards expected.

3 – Principles

- 3.1 Manage staff appraisal in accordance with relevant guidance and legislation;
- 3.2 Ensure that the procedures within this document are applied consistently;
- 3.3 Use this policy and procedures as a framework for a clear and consistent assessment of the overall performance of all staff (where applicable) for supporting their development needs within the context of the academy's improvement plan and their professional needs;
- 3.4 Ensure that, where employees are eligible for pay progression, the assessment of performance throughout the cycle against the relevant standards and other performance criteria and objectives specified in the statement will be the basis on which the recommendation is made by the appraiser, agreed by the Principal and ratified by the appropriate Trustee and/or Local Academy Improvement Management (AIM) Partner committee;
- 3.5 Notwithstanding 3.4, pay progression for employees on the National Joint Council (Green Book) Conditions of Service are subject to automatic progression on an annual basis until such time as the top scope of the relevant scale is reached;
- 3.6 Use this policy and its procedures to:
 - a. Enable employees achieve standards of excellence in their work performance in order to continually raise outcomes;
 - b. Help employees identify the knowledge and skills required for performing their role efficiently as this will drive their focus towards performing the right task in the right way;
 - c. Boost the performance of employees by encouraging employee empowerment, motivation and implementation of an effective reward mechanism;
 - d. Promote a two-way system of communication between the appraisers and the appraisee for clarifying expectations about the roles and accountabilities, communicating the functional and organisational goals, providing regular and honest feedback for improving employee performance and continuous coaching;
 - e. Identifying the barriers to effective performance and resolving those barriers through monitoring, coaching and development interventions;
 - f. Creating a basis for administrative decisions, strategic planning, succession planning, promotions and performance-based interventions;

- g. Promoting personal growth and advancement in the career of the employees by helping them in acquiring the desired knowledge and skills;
- h. Ensuring that all employees are held to account and improvements are implemented;
- i. Ensure that, if an individual is experiencing difficulties, everything possible is done before a decision is made to consider recommending transition to capability procedures.

4 – Definition of Terms

- 4.1 The Trust – Transforming Lives Educational Trust.
- 4.2 Appraiser – a Trust/academy leader responsible for leading the appraisal cycle for one or more members of staff.
- 4.3 Appraisee – the member of staff whose performance is being appraised.
- 4.4 Pupils – any child or young person who attends an academy in the Trust.
- 4.5 Teacher – any teacher who is employed by the Trust, including the Principal.
- 4.6 Support Staff – all employees who are not employed as qualified teachers.

5 – Procedure

5.1 Appraisal Period

The appraisal period for teachers including the Principal and support staff runs for one year from 1st September to 31st August. This is usually referred to as the Appraisal Cycle.

5.2 Appointment of Appraisers

The Principal must be appraised by partners of the academy's Academy Improvement Management Board (AIM), members of the Board of Trustees (BOT), usually the Chair, and/or the Chief Executive Officer and supported by a suitably skilled and/or experienced external adviser who has been appointed by the Board of Trustees for that purpose. The Principal will decide who will appraise all other staff at the academy.

Where a Principal is of the opinion that any of the Trustees/AIM Partners appointed under this regulation is unsuitable for professional reasons, s/he may submit a written request to the Board of Trustees for that Trustee/AIM Partner to be replaced, stating those reasons. However, the Board of Trustees ultimately decide on appraisal panel members for a Principal.

The elected members of the AIM and BOT will work with the Principal to agree performance objectives, after consultation with the external adviser. Objectives for all other employees will be set before or as soon as practicable after the start of each relevant appraisal period. The objectives set will be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound (SMART) and will be appropriate to the role and level of experience. The appraiser and appraisee will seek to agree the objectives and judgements but, if that is not possible, the appraiser will determine these. Objectives may be revised if circumstances change. If an appraisee feels that any objectives or judgements are unfair, they should contact the Chair of the AIM Board.

The objectives set will, if achieved, contribute to the academy's plans for improving the academy's educational provision, culture and performance and improving the education of pupils at the academy.

Before, or as soon as practicable after, the start of each appraisal period, each employee will be informed of the standards (where applicable/available) against which their performance in that appraisal period will be assessed. All teachers should be assessed against the set of standards contained in the latest version of the document called 'Teachers' Standards' published in September 2012. The Principal or AIM Board (as appropriate) will consider whether certain teachers should also be assessed against other sets of standards published by the Secretary of State that are relevant to them, e.g. those on the Upper Pay Scale.

In the case of the CEO, their appraisal will be led and managed by the Board of Trustees but will follow the same principles of support and Trust improvement set out for other staff in this policy. The appraisal of all other members of the Executive Team will be managed by the CEO.

Appraisers will be sufficiently experienced leaders and trained in order to fulfil this role. Performance objectives will be moderated annually by members of the academy's Senior Leadership Team to ensure consistency, fairness and equitability.

5.3 Links to Trust/Academy Improvement

The arrangements for appraisal link with those for trust/academy improvement, trust/academy self-evaluation and trust/academy development planning. To minimise workload and bureaucracy, the appraisal process will be one source of information as appropriate for self-evaluation and the wider improvement process. The trust's or academy's Strategic Impact Plan (SIP) and Self Evaluation Summary (SES) are key documents for the appraisal process.

All appraisers are required to explore the alignment of appraisees' objectives with the priorities and plans and the quality of teaching matched to the Teachers' Standards. The objectives should also aim to reflect appraisees' professional aspirations.

5.4 Consistency of Treatment and Fairness

The Board of Trustees is committed to ensuring consistency of treatment and fairness in the operation of appraisal. To ensure this, the following provisions are made in relation to moderation, objective setting and reviewing progress:

5.4.1 Quality Assurance

The Principal is the appraiser for all employees in an academy. However, the Principal may choose to delegate this responsibility to the academy's Vice Principal/s, Assistant Principals or other suitable member of the academy's leadership. All appraisers must be appropriately trained and have sufficient experience and expertise in order to be an effective appraiser. In these circumstances the Principal will check all the planning statements to check that the plans recorded in the statements at the academy:

- contribute to improving the education of pupils at the academy;
- contribute to the implementation of the academy's improvement planning;
- are consistent between those who have similar experience and similar levels of responsibility;
- comply with the academy's appraisal policy, the regulations and the requirements of equality legislation.

The Board of Trustees and the AIM Board will ensure that a sufficient number of Trustees/AIM Partners are not involved in the Principal's appraisal or any appeal regarding the Principal's appraisal to ensure that the Principal's planning statement is consistent with the academy's improvement priorities and complies with the academy's appraisal policy and the Regulations.

The Board of Trustees will review the quality assurance processes when the appraisal policy is reviewed.

5.4.2 Objective Setting

The Trust does not have a prescribed format in order to set objectives and to manage supporting evidence. Some of the Trust's academies use online provision and others have their own internal recording templates. Regardless of the format for recording, the objectives set will be rigorous, challenging, achievable, time-bound, fair and equitable in relation to employees with similar roles/responsibilities and experience.

Appraisers will have regard to what can reasonably be expected of any employee in their current role given the desirability of the appraisee being able to achieve a satisfactory balance between the time required to discharge their professional duties and the time required to pursue their personal interests outside work, consistent with the academy's policy for enabling all staff to achieve their work/life balance.

Appraisers shall also take account of an individual's professional aspirations and any relevant pay progression criteria, where applicable. Objectives should be such that, if they are achieved, they will contribute to improving the education of pupils and contribute to the implementation of improvement planning, designed to improve its educational provision and performance. They should also contribute to improving the progress of pupils, where applicable to that employee's role.

The appraiser and appraisee will seek to agree the objectives but where a joint determination cannot be made the appraiser will make the determination.

In this Trust:

- all employees, including the Principal and members of the Executive, will normally have no more than four objectives, but this amount may be more or less depending on the content of each individual objective and as a collective of objectives;
- staff, including the Principal and members of the Executive, will not necessarily all have the same number of objectives;
- all teachers will have objectives linked to the quality of teaching (matched with Teachers' Standards), pupil progress, academy improvement and professional development.

Though appraisal is an assessment of overall performance, including appraisal of objectives for that year, objectives cannot cover the full range of an employee's role and responsibilities. Objectives will, therefore, focus on the priorities for an individual for the appraisal cycle.

5.4.3 Reviewing Progress

Performance is monitored continuously during the appraisal cycle as an integral part of the trust's and each academy's monitoring processes. At the end of the cycle, assessment of performance will be against the relevant standards and objectives identified at the start of the cycle. Good progress towards the achievement of a challenging objective, even if the performance criteria have not been met in full, will be assessed favourably.

The appraisal cycle is annual, but on occasions it may be appropriate to set objectives that will cover a period over more or less than one cycle. In such cases, the basis on which the progress being made towards meeting the performance criteria for the objective will be assessed at the end of the first cycle and will be recorded in the planning and review statement at the beginning of the cycle.

5.5 Recognising exceptional performance

The appraisal process is used across the Trust as a means to identify staff with particular strengths or as a means of recognising an individual who has made an exceptional contribution to the academy, which may exceed their pay grade and related standards. As a Trust, we are committed to the nurturing and rewarding of excellence among our staff. An individual's strengths are highlighted at the appraisal review meeting in writing and this will include strengths related to specific appraisal objectives and any additional contributions or examples of exceptional performance during an academic year. Appraisers should consider how to best share an employee's exceptional performance and on-going strengths, for example by encouraging the sharing of best practice and/or support with other schools or encouraging a Specialist Leader in Education application via the Trust's Teaching School, or similar. This should be an integral part of the appraisal conversation as it underpins professional growth and impact for the appraisee and for the Trust's academies. Please see the Trust Policy for Pay for further information.

5.6 Employees Experiencing Difficulties

Where, during the appraisal cycle, there are concerns about any aspects of an individual's performance, support and guidance will be provided with the aim that the individual's performance improves and the need to move into formal capability procedures is avoided. Where it is apparent that there are concerns about an individual's performance (through the appraisal process or via other sources of information), the appraiser will meet the individual formally to:

- give clear feedback about the nature and seriousness of the concerns;
- give the individual the opportunity to comment and discuss the concerns;
- agree an action plan with appropriate support (e.g. coaching, mentoring, support, structured observations, visits to other classes or academies, discussions with advisors) that will be provided to help address those specific concerns;
- make clear how, and by when, the appraiser will review progress (*it may be appropriate to revise objectives, and it will be necessary to allow sufficient time for improvement. The amount of time is up to the academy but should reflect the seriousness of the concerns*);
- explain the implications and process if no, or insufficient, improvement is made.

The above will be confirmed in writing to the individual (with a copy to the Principal or CEO in the case of Central Team employees) within five working days of the meeting.

The individual's progress will continue to be monitored as part of the appraisal process and regular feedback on progress will be given. Arrangements will be made to modify the support programme if appropriate.

If the appraiser is satisfied that the individual has made, or is making, sufficient improvement, the appraisal process will continue as normal, with any remaining issues continuing to be addressed through that process.

If, however, the appraiser is not satisfied with the progress, the individual will be informed that a recommendation of transition to capability will be made to the Principal or CEO in the case of Central Team employees.

If concerns arise about the performance of a Principal, a similar process of support will be put in place, managed by the AIM Board and the Board of Trustees. Similarly, if concerns arise about the performance of a member of the Trust's Executive team, a similar process of support will be put in place, managed by the Board of Trustees

5.7 Appeals

At specified points in the appraisal process employees have a right of appeal against any of the entries in their planning and review statements. Where an appraisee wishes to appeal on the basis of more than one entry this would constitute one appeal hearing.

Details of the appeals process are covered in the Trust's Pay Policy.

5.8 Confidentiality

Confidentiality underpins the appraisal process. However, there may be a need to share some details with Trustees/AIM Partners and other key members of staff for a variety of reasons, including:

- Planning continuing professional development;
- Quality assurance;
- Pay recommendations;
- Making efficient use of aggregated lesson observation information for a variety of academy leadership purposes.

In addition, regulators such as the Regional Schools' Commissioner (RSC), the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) or Ofsted may investigate the effectiveness of the appraisal policy and process. In so doing, however, the confidentiality of the process for individuals will not be compromised. In so far as possible, information will be anonymous.

5.9 Support and Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

The Trust's and its academies CPD programmes will be informed by the training and development needs identified in the training annex of the appraisees' planning and review statements. The AIM Boards in the case of academies and the Board of Trustees in the case of the Central Team will ensure in the budget planning that,

as far as possible, appropriate resources are made available in the budget for any professional development and support agreed for appraisees.

An account of the training and development needs in general, including the instances where it did not prove possible to provide any agreed CPD, will form a part of the Principal's annual report to the AIM Board about the operation of appraisal in the academy. A similar report will be provided to the Board of Trustees regarding the effectiveness of central team CPD.

With regard to the provision of CPD in the case of competing demands on the budget, a decision on relative priority will be taken with regard to the extent to which: (a) the CPD identified is essential for an appraisee to meet their objectives; and (b) the extent to which the training and support will help the academy/trust to achieve its priorities. The academy's/trust's priorities will have precedence.

5.10 The Appraisal Cycle

The performance of employees must be reviewed on an annual basis. Each academy aims to complete performance planning and appraisals for all teachers and support staff by 31st October, and by 31st December for Principals. Appraisal for central team employees will follow this time frame, where possible.

Employees who are employed on a fixed term contract of less than one year, will have their performance managed in accordance with the principles underpinning the provisions of this policy. The length of the cycle will be determined by the duration of their contract.

Where an employee starts or returns to their employment (e.g. maternity leave) part-way through a cycle, the line manager or, in the case where the employee is the Principal or CEO, members of the AIM and BOT respectively shall determine the length of the first cycle for that member of staff, with a view to bringing his/her cycle into line with the cycle for others as soon as possible.

Where an employee transfers to a new post within the academy part-way through a cycle, the line manager or, in the case where the employee is the Principal or CEO, members of the AIM and BOT respectively shall determine whether the cycle shall begin again and whether to change the appraiser.

5.11 Retention of Statements

Appraisal planning and review statements will be retained for a minimum period of 6 years.

5.12 Access to Documentation

All employees will be provided with access to the Strategic Impact Planning (SIP) and the Self-Evaluation Summary (SES).

5.13 Meeting Guidance

5.13.1 The Appraiser is responsible for:

- Arranging the date, time and suitable place, private and free from interruptions, for the appraisal meeting.
- Ensuring, unless mutually agreed otherwise, that the appraisee has at least two weeks before the formal review date.
- Access to the necessary review format to help plan for the review.
- Making use of the preparation time to organise thoughts, reading through the form and accompanying documents and using a copy of the review format to make notes in the appropriate boxes which will aid the discussion at the formal Appraisal Meeting.

5.13.2 As an Appraisee

This is your process and your meeting. Consequently, you need to take the relevant documentation and evidence to the meeting. Objectives are not set to create a pass/fail situation – they are there as a challenging benchmark to help us all improve and develop.

Ensure you take:

- Your copy of the Mid-Cycle Review;
- Last year's Action Plan – with your objectives from last year;
- Evidence of your performance against objectives;
- A clear idea as to what your objectives should be and why they are sufficiently challenging.

Remember, the purpose of this meeting is:

- To evaluate current performance standards and to recognise achievement;
- To identify current areas of strength and areas for improvement with the appraiser;
- To agree objectives with the appraiser which are challenging and lead to improved performance

5.14 Classroom Observation Protocol

5.14.1 Introduction

The Trust is committed to ensuring that classroom observation is developmental and supportive and that those involved in the process will:

- carry out the role with professionalism, integrity and courtesy;
- evaluate objectively;
- report accurately and fairly; and
- respect the confidentiality of the information gained.

The Principal has a duty to evaluate the standards of teaching and learning and to ensure that proper standards of professional performance are established and maintained. Observation is one form of evidence in assessing a teacher's progress in relation to agreed objectives. The amount and type of classroom observation will depend on the individual circumstances of the teacher and the overall needs of the academy but should reflect and be proportionate to the needs of the individual and the principle of inverse proportionality should be applied.

The length and frequency of drop-in or other observations, and the notice to be given, will vary depending on specific circumstances.

Information gathered during the observation can be used, as appropriate, for other purposes including informing academy self-evaluation and academy improvement strategies.

Lesson observation is just one form of monitoring teacher performance and is part of the academy's wider monitoring processes, which include, but are not limited by, the monitoring of:

- Pupils' work;
- Learning environments, inc. climate for learning;
- Talking with pupils;
- Data analysis;
- Discussion with staff;
- Discussion with parents/carers.

Teachers (including the Principals) whose posts have responsibilities outside the classroom should also expect to have their performance of those responsibilities observed and assessed.

5.14.2 Arrangements for Observations

As a standard, observations may take place every term. However, where evidence emerges about a teacher's performance which gives rise to concern, more frequent observations (and other forms of monitoring) may be appropriate, e.g. weekly. The focus of any arrangements for observations will normally be established at the appraisal planning meeting between the teacher and the appraiser and will be included in the annual written appraisal report. They will be reviewed as necessary at any feedback or subsequent review meeting.

Information gathered during the observation will be used, as appropriate, for a variety of purposes including to inform academy self-evaluation and academy improvement strategies in accordance with the academy's commitment to streamlining data collection and minimising bureaucracy and workload burdens on staff.

In keeping with the commitment to be supportive and developmental, classroom observations will be notified in advance but teachers may not be given the specific date or time of the observation.

Classroom observations that inform appraisal will only be undertaken by persons with QTS.

Feedback will be provided within five working days of the observation taking place. If issues emerged from an observation that were not part of the focus of the observation as recorded in the planning and review statement, these should also be covered in the written feedback and the appropriate action taken in accordance with the regulations and guidance.

The written record of feedback also includes the date on which the observation took place. The teacher is encouraged to amend written comments on the feedback document. No written notes in addition to the written feedback will be kept.

The Principal has a duty to evaluate the standards of teaching and learning and to ensure that proper standards of professional performance are established and maintained. The Principal has the right to conduct unannounced visits (drop ins) to inform their monitoring of the quality of learning.

6 – Equality Statement

6.1 This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any individual (with due regard to their protected characteristics), and it helps to promote equality across the Trust.

7 – Monitoring

7.1 It is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees, and those they delegate authority, to ensure that the principles and procedures of this policy are adhered to. The use of this policy will be subject to routine monitoring to ensure its fidelity in practice. The evidence gathered from monitoring at regular intervals shall inform any reviews and future revisions to the policy, and no later than that stated on Page 1 of this policy.