

Visits and Exchanges Guidelines

Introduction

Visits and exchanges are already being used as a form of staff development within the university. A visit or an exchange will provide staff with an alternative method of development to traditional training courses and will benefit the staff by gaining new skills, knowledge and experiences. Visits and exchanges will also facilitate the smooth operation of university activities through staff having a wider appreciation of what other areas do and will improve cross functional communications.

A visit is the temporary movement of an employee to a different part of the university for a specific developmental purpose for a defined length of time, which will normally be up to one week in total. Exchanges operate to the same principles as visits except that they will involve reciprocal visits between the Faculty/Directorate concerned. Examples of visits and exchanges could include staff from a Faculty/Directorate taking part in a visit or exchange with a Faculty/Directorate that they link or with staff from a Directorate visiting their counterparts on a different campus in the University.

Visits or exchanges are available to all members of staff. A visit or exchange may be identified during the discussions of staff development needs in the staff appraisal process; from informal discussions between the member of staff and their manager or as part of the induction for a new member of staff.

Format

The format of each visit or exchange will vary as it will be tailored to the specific needs of the individual member(s) of staff taking part. However, the following questions should be considered when determining whether a visit or exchange is the most suitable method for meeting the specific development needs.

- ❖ What specific knowledge, skills and experience need developing?
- ❖ Is a visit or an exchange the most suitable development activity to meet the development needs?
- ❖ What are your aims/objectives for taking part in the visit or exchange?
- ❖ How will the visit or exchange meet the development needs?
- ❖ How will the visit or exchange improve your working practices?
- ❖ How will the visit or exchange benefit the Faculty/Directorate?
- ❖ Who needs to be involved to organise the visit or exchange?
- ❖ How will you check that the intended improvements have been made after the visit or exchange?

If a visit or exchange is deemed to be the best method for meeting an individual's development needs, the individual should contact the Learning and Talent Development Team who will assist in organising and evaluating the effectiveness of the visit or exchange.

Reporting

Reference should be made to visits or exchanges in the pertinent sections of the relevant Faculties/Directorates 3 year reporting and planning cycle documentation. A visit or exchange should be evaluated to assess how the original aims/objectives have been met by taking part in the visit or exchange and the wider effect it has had on the Faculty/Directorate. This can be achieved by the member of staff and their line manager informally discussing the improvement in their working practices as a consequence of the visit or exchange. Formally the impact of the visit or exchange should be documented in the staff appraisal form and in a development activity evaluation form which the Learning and Talent Development Team will send the individual. This form will be analysed and will enable the Team to monitor development activities across the university.