

Employee Support Procedure

March 2021

Policy control

Reference	Employee Support Procedure
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Approving Bodies	HR Committee, Board of Governors
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Supporting policy	Absence Management Procedure Capability Policy and Procedure Staff Disciplinary Policy and Procedure Flexible Working Policy Disability Leave Policy Dignity and Respect at Work and Study Policy
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EMPLOYEE SUPPORT PROCEDURE

1. Purpose and scope

The Employee Support Procedure applies to all employees of The Glasgow School of Art (GSA).

GSA recognises that informal assistance may be more beneficial to enable employees to improve on a sustained basis. The aim of this procedure is to provide support to employees within the workplace by ensuring cases of minor misconduct, unsatisfactory performance or attendance are resolved informally at an early stage.

This procedure would normally be applied in situations where for an individual:

- there are issues of poor performance;
- their attendance is less than satisfactory (if this relates to sickness absence, this procedure would be used in conjunction with the Sickness Absence – Trigger Points outlined in the Absence Management Policy and Procedure);
- there have been minor isolated incidents of poor conduct, for example inappropriate behaviour;
- a return to work meeting has highlighted any potential ongoing health concerns and/or personal issues;
- the employee requests support from the GSA.

Where informal intervention under the Employee Support Procedure does not bring about an improvement, or the unsatisfactory performance or misconduct is considered too serious to be classed as minor, the line manager should seek advice from the Human Resources (HR) department regarding proceeding to the formal stage of either the Capability Policy and Procedure or the Staff Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

1.1 Definition of Performance

‘Performance’ in this procedure refers to an individual fulfilling reasonable designated duties relative to his/her role. The line manager should deal promptly and fairly with concerns relating to an individual’s performance. Such issues may be attributed to compromised capability relative to an individual’s role, which may arise from a wide number of factors and impediments including:

- lack of facilities or unsatisfactory working environment crucial to the execution of the role;
- lack of aptitude, skill or experience, which may be the result of inappropriate recruitment, selection, induction or training, lack of proficiency and unsatisfactory overall organisation relative to the role;
- changes in the nature and allocation of work, including heavy or unrealistic workload;
- personal/family difficulties/health problems, perhaps associated with low attendance at work;
- changes in technology;
- reorganisation or redefinition of role.

This list is not exhaustive. Understanding the possible causes when issues arise is fundamental, and can enable the line manager and employee to engage in constructive discussion regarding

appropriate support, so that all reasonable efforts are made to aid improvement and elicit a positive outcome. For example, lack of capability to meet role requirements may be due to inability caused by another factor such as lack of knowledge, or clarity of what is required. In these circumstances further training or better clarification of objectives may resolve the issues. Line managers should always seek to understand the nature and cause of the problem, not make assumptions, and should agree what support they will provide to their employee.

If it is determined that issues have arisen from a change in GSA's standards or expectations of the role, the revised standards and/or expectations will be discussed with the employee and appropriate support, and training will be offered to reach and maintain these changes.

2. Procedure

2.1 Employee Support Meetings

Once an issue has been identified (either by the line manager or employee), a meeting should take place between the line manager and employee with a focus on finding ways for the employee to improve. The tone of the meeting should be supportive.

There is no requirement for employees to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague during employee support meetings. However, if both the line manager and employee feel it beneficial for the employee to be accompanied, this may be arranged.

During the employee support meetings, the employee is required to engage in discussion with their line manager in an attempt to define the issues. A more positive outcome is likely to result if both parties understand the difficulties and agree together ways of resolving them.

Issues originating outside the workplace may have an impact on work performance, conduct or attendance. Such concerns typically include health, relationship, family, financial, legal, anxiety, alcohol, drugs and other related issues. Issues identified arising within the workplace may include work demands, fairness at work, working relationships, infringements of dignity and respect, interpersonal skills, work life balance, physical aspects of the working environment and other related issues.

A range of support measures that may be offered to the employee are outlined in Appendix 1. Human Resources can offer advice on appropriate application of these measures.

Where there is an identified problem relating to performance, training or coaching may be offered to the employee as a form of support to assist them in meeting the required standard. Human Resources can also advise in this respect.

2.2 Employee Support Action Plan

An Employee Support Action Plan (Appendix 2) will be drawn up, detailing the main points of discussion, agreements reached and the agreed period of review.

2.3 Review Period

If the review period is more than one month, it would be beneficial to have interim review meetings to give feedback and support. This will assist in improvements being reached within the agreed timescales.

It is important that employees receive positive feedback acknowledging any improvements in performance, attendance or conduct.

At the end of the review period, the line manager and employee should meet again to discuss the current levels of performance, attendance or conduct. Where the employee has improved to a satisfactory level, they should be advised by the line manager that no further action is required.

If the performance, attendance or conduct remains below a satisfactory standard, following the agreed review period, the line manager should contact Human Resources to seek advice in proceeding to the formal stage of either the Capability Policy and Procedure or the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

3. Records

The line manager will keep a record of the Employee Support Action Plan for reference, as well as notes of any meetings held. These documents will be held for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which they were intended.

4. Questions or complaints

Clarification on the terms or operation of this Procedure may be obtained from Human Resources. Any complaints in relation to the Procedure or its operation should be directed to a member of the HR department.

APPENDIX 1

There are a number of tools that may be deployed to support employees in undertaking their role where any challenges have been identified. The following can be considered by line managers and employees together when deciding on the Employee Support Action Plan:

a) **Adjustments to workload**

It can be useful to consider whether there are any apparent workload issues, either in relation to capacity or in respect to the work undertaken being grade/role appropriate. Having made that assessment, appropriate adjustments should be considered.

b) **Adjustments to working hours and/or work pattern**

The way in which the working pattern is configured can contribute to an employee's ability to deliver to the expected standards. Consideration should be given as to whether any appropriate alterations could have a positive impact. Guidelines on the assessment of and process for augmenting working hours/patterns can be sourced in the Flexible Working Policy and Procedure. Any adjustments to working hours or patterns should be considered in line with that Policy.

c) **Professional development and training**

There are a number of development and training opportunities that can be scoped when assessing how to better equip an employee with the skills and/or knowledge to undertake their role. Some examples include:

- on-the-job training (provided by a suitably qualified colleague)
- coaching and mentoring
- secondment to or work experience in other areas of the institution
- targeted structured training events or programmes

Advice can be sought from the HR department on the sourcing and application of such development activities.

General information on staff development can be obtained from:

<https://gsofa.sharepoint.com/sites/intranet/ProfessionalSupport/HR/Pages/Home.aspx>

d) **Additional or new equipment or resources**

It may be necessary to consider whether adequate equipment and other resources are in place that allows an employee to deliver expected outcomes.

e) **Alterations to workspace environment**

An assessment of whether the working environment could be creating any challenges for an employee can be made. Where any specific environmental issues have been identified, it may be appropriate to conduct a Risk Assessment or Environmental Audit to inform any alterations to be given consideration. Guidance in this respect can be obtained from the HR department or the Health and Safety department.

e) **Supervision**

In certain circumstances an employee may benefit from closer supervision and guidance in the form of regular contact and/or structured meetings with their line manager.

f) **Redeployment**

Depending on the individual circumstances and opportunities available, it may be possible to consider whether an employee might benefit from being redeployed to a different role within the organisation.

Guidance should always be sought from the HR department regarding any proposals of this nature as the implications can be complex and varied.

g) **Health and wellbeing referrals**

There are a number of support mechanisms available at GSA either for individual access or by referral that can assist with any health and wellbeing issues experienced by employees. These are:

- **Occupational Health Consultation**

Occupational health consultations provide an opportunity to consider the effect of work on health, and the effect of health on work. A referral can assist in identifying factors that may be contributing to ill health in the workplace and to determine any action required to minimise the impact. Recommendations are then based on a well-informed assessment of the risks and any suitable control measures that may help to prevent or minimise ill health, specifically related to the nature of the role.

More information can be obtained from:

<https://gsofa.sharepoint.com/sites/intranet/ProfessionalSupport/HR/Useful%20Documents/OH%20-%20Employee%20Information%20Sheet.pdf#search=integral>

- **Therapy**

There are a range of therapies that can be utilised to assist employees with mental wellbeing and GSA can make a referral to these services based on the individual circumstances of the employee. Sessions are either fully or part-funded (depending on duration of treatment) and in all cases up to six sessions are funded by GSA.

More information on the types of therapy available can be obtained from:

<http://www.centreoftherapy.org/therapy>

- **Employee Assistance Programme – Life and Progress**

The Employee Assistance Programme provides a wealth of practical information and resources as well as confidential counselling to assist staff balancing work, family and personal lives.

More information can be obtained from:

<https://gsofa.sharepoint.com/sites/intranet/ProfessionalSupport/HR/Useful%20Documents/lap-wpo-leaflet-2018.pdf#search=life%20and%20progress>

This service is completely confidential, and individual staff can access this service and can access at any time without referral, on the following Freephone number: **0330 058 4885**

Support can also be accessed online via the website below:

www.lap-assist.co.uk

username: **glasgow**

password: **employee**

- **Wellbeing and Mental Health Digital Platforms**

Wellbeing and Mental Health Digital Platforms to support staff with their wellbeing and mental health:

Togetherall: <https://togetherall.com/en-gb/>

SilverCloud: gsastaff.silvercloudhealth.com/signup

SilverCloud is a digital mental health platform offering 20 programmes covering wellbeing, mental health and chronic health conditions, and is easy to access and use.

EMPLOYEE SUPPORT ACTION PLAN

Name of Employee

Date

AREAS	SUCCESS CRITERIA	ASSISTANCE REQUIRED	REVIEW TIMESCALE

Employee signature:

Date:

Line manager signature:

Date: