TOWARDS A FRAMEWORK FOR PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IN A HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

VOLUME ONE

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DECLARATION

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed……………………………………………. (candidate)

Date………………………………………………..

STATEMENT 1

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Where correction services have been used, the extent and nature of the correction is clearly marked in a footnote(s).

Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

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STATEMENT 2

I hereby give consent for my thesis, if accepted, to be available for photocopying and for inter-library loans after expiry of a bar on access, approved by UWIC, for a period of twelve months.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my family – Ultan, Luke and Hannah – thanks guys for your love and support and for putting up with me – the kitchen table is all yours!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This seven year journey from registration to completion has not been carried out alone. I would therefore like to record my sincere gratitude to all the people who have helped me during this time and in particular, Dr. Claire Haven-Tang in her role as Director of Studies and Professor Eleri Jones as my Supervisor, for their master class lessons in topiary and skilful guidance in helping me to find the chicken!

There have also been a number of other colleagues who have been instrumental in making this happen. My thanks go to Anne Cleverly for firing the starting pistol, Pam Ackroyd for the organisational commitment and Jonathan Barrow for his continuing support and encouragement.

I am extremely grateful to UL’s Executive and Senior Management Groups for taking part in the interviews and for UL’s middle managers for finding the time and the enthusiasm to complete the survey. I hope I have represented your views accurately and told your stories well.

A special thank you also goes to the ‘technical’ team who have been fantastic – Esther Cox on presentation and format, Ian Williams on Ultimate Survey, Karen Jones on proof reading and last but not least, thank you to Kerry Evans and Mick Grant the security guards who have kept an eye on me.

If nothing else, this is a well travelled piece of work – summer in Spain, Easter in Florida, camping in Ireland, half term in New York. I am delighted that it has now reached a final destination and my sincere thanks go to all who have made this journey possible.
PROLEGOMENON

Laurie Taylor Column

How's it going?

Couldn't be better. More and more teaching. More and more administration. And the research assessment exercise on the horizon. Happy days are here again.

There's no need to be quite so cynical. We might all be happier than you think.

How's that?

Haven't you read the new report? Workforce Performance Indicators 2005 - Higher Education Sector.

What does it say?

It says that university staff, including lecturers and researchers at all grades, are overwhelmingly satisfied with their pay, work-life balance and career development.

Really?

Absolutely. Of course, it's a tremendous feather in the cap for university human resources managers. They must be doing a great job.

I suppose so. Who compiled the report?

Seventy university human resources managers.

They based it on up-to-date staff surveys?

Not really. You see, the same report shows that nearly half of all university resource managers haven't carried out any surveys of staff satisfaction for the past two years. In fact, nearly one in five of all university human resource managers have never carried out any survey at all of staff views and attitudes. And only one in four of those who have conducted a survey changed anything in response to the results.

So, what you're telling me is that a group of people with a vested interest in university staff being overwhelmingly satisfied with their lot have decided, without any real objective evidence, that on the whole, all things considered, university staff are overwhelmingly satisfied with their lot.

I've warned you before about that cynicism.

ABSTRACT

The increased emphasis on improving performance and accountability in higher education has seen the introduction of league tables, the development of key performance indicators and the requirement to make explicit in HR strategies action to tackle poor performance. At the same time, the need to attract, recruit, develop and retain the right calibre of employees is now widely recognised as a source of competitive advantage. It is through their staff, that universities are able to respond to the challenges of the changing HE environment and the effective management of performance at organisational, school/unit and individual level is therefore critical to success.

A literature review on performance management (with a particular emphasis on HR policies underpinning the Employee Life Cycle) culminated in the development of a unified theoretical model.

This action research investigated managers’ perspectives of performance management in a post-92 HEI. It sought to establish current performance management practices and identify areas of congruence and dissonance between three different management groups. Research methods included a case study of the university’s journey towards improving performance, one-to-one interviews with 21 executive and senior managers and an on-line survey questionnaire returned by 44 academic and support middle managers.

The research revealed that the holistic, complex and multidisciplinary phenomenon of performance management was not fully understood amongst managers and whilst many good practices were evidenced, opportunities for setting out performance expectations and planning, supporting and reviewing performance were sometimes under-developed or not sufficiently deployed. All management groups experienced difficulties when managing individual performance, exacerbated by a general dislike of having to tackle issues of poor performance.

The study concludes that compliance is a major issue that threatens the performance of the institution. A performance management framework to assist managers in optimising the right performance management tools and opportunities is proffered as a solution.
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## GLOSSARY

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<th>Acronym</th>
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<tr>
<td>ACAS</td>
<td>Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service</td>
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<td>AMO</td>
<td>Ability, Motivation and Opportunity</td>
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<td>APR</td>
<td>Annual Programme Review</td>
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<td>BSC</td>
<td>Balanced Scorecard</td>
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<td>CIPD</td>
<td>Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development</td>
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<td>CPD</td>
<td>Continuing Professional Development</td>
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<td>CRB</td>
<td>Criminal Records Bureau</td>
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<td>CSE</td>
<td>Customer Service Excellence</td>
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<td>CSP</td>
<td>Corporate Strategic Plan</td>
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<td>CUC</td>
<td>Committee of University Chairmen</td>
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<td>CV</td>
<td>Curriculum Vitae</td>
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<td>CVCP</td>
<td>Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals</td>
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<td>DfES</td>
<td>Department for Education and Skills</td>
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<td>Dti</td>
<td>Department of Trade and Industry</td>
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<td>ECC</td>
<td>Education Competencies Consortium</td>
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<td>EFQM</td>
<td>European Foundation for Quality Management</td>
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<td>ELC</td>
<td>Employee Life Cycle</td>
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<td>EMG</td>
<td>Executive Management Group</td>
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<td>ET</td>
<td>Employment Tribunal</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>FLM</td>
<td>Front Line Manager</td>
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<td>FT</td>
<td>Financial Times</td>
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<td>HE</td>
<td>Higher Education</td>
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<td>HEFCE</td>
<td>Higher Education Funding Council for England</td>
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<td>HEFCW</td>
<td>Higher Education Funding Council for Wales</td>
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<td>HEI</td>
<td>Higher Education Institution</td>
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<td>HERA</td>
<td>Higher Education Role Analysis</td>
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<td>HESA</td>
<td>Higher Education Statistical Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>HNC/HND</td>
<td>Higher National Certificate/Diploma</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<td>HOD</td>
<td>Heart of the Diamond</td>
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<tr>
<td>HR</td>
<td>Human Resources</td>
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<td>HRC</td>
<td>Human Resources Committee</td>
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<td>HRM/HRD</td>
<td>Human Resource Management/Development</td>
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<td>iIP</td>
<td>Investors in People</td>
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<td>ISD</td>
<td>Information Services Division</td>
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<td>ISO</td>
<td>International Standards Organisation</td>
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<td>JCC</td>
<td>Joint Consultative Committee</td>
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<td>JD</td>
<td>Job Description</td>
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<td>JNCHES</td>
<td>Joint Negotiating Committee for Higher Education Staff</td>
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<td>KPI</td>
<td>Key Performance Indicator</td>
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<td>LDC</td>
<td>Leadership Development Centre</td>
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<td>LFHE</td>
<td>Leadership Foundation for Higher Education</td>
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<td>LLUK</td>
<td>Lifelong Learning United Kingdom</td>
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<td>MCI</td>
<td>Management Charter Initiative</td>
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<td>NFA</td>
<td>National Framework Agreement</td>
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<td>NSS</td>
<td>National Student Survey</td>
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<td>OD</td>
<td>Organisational Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>PESTLE</td>
<td>Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, Environmental</td>
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<tr>
<td>PI</td>
<td>Performance Indicator</td>
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<td>PISG</td>
<td>Performance Indicator Steering Group</td>
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<td>PRP</td>
<td>Performance/Profit Related Pay</td>
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<td>PS</td>
<td>Person Specification</td>
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<td>QAA</td>
<td>Quality Assurance Agency</td>
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<td>RDAPs</td>
<td>Research Degree Awarding Powers</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMART</td>
<td>Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timed</td>
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<td>SMG</td>
<td>Senior Managerial Group</td>
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<td>SMPT</td>
<td>School Management and Planning Team</td>
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<td>SOSR</td>
<td>Some Other Substantial Reason</td>
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<td>SPRS</td>
<td>Staff Performance Review Scheme</td>
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<td>SR&amp;DS</td>
<td>Staff Review And Development Scheme</td>
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<tr>
<td>SWOT</td>
<td>Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>TDAPs</td>
<td>Taught Degree Awarding Powers</td>
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<td>TQM</td>
<td>Total Quality Management</td>
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<td>UCAS</td>
<td>University and Colleges Admissions System</td>
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<td>UCAS</td>
<td>Universities and Colleges Admissions System</td>
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<td>UCEA</td>
<td>Universities and Colleges Employers Association</td>
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<td>UCU</td>
<td>University and College Union</td>
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<td>UL</td>
<td>University of Llareggub</td>
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<td>WAG</td>
<td>Welsh Assembly Government</td>
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Chapter One

Introduction

Setting the Scene

April 2009
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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The United Kingdom’s 167 universities and colleges are rich and diverse, self governing and independent. With over two million students, a funded income of £15.6 billion and the ability to contribute £34 million a year to the UK economy, (HEFCE, 2005) Higher Education (HE) is big business.

The sector employs around 300,000 academic and support staff which equates to approximately 1.1% of the UK workforce. Staff are a valuable and important asset but they are also costly; 70% of institutional budgets are typically expended on their remuneration (HEFCE, 2006, p.3).

In HE, as in all public sector organisations, there is an increased emphasis on improving performance and accountability (WAG, 2002a). In this environment, the need to attract, recruit, develop and retain the right calibre of employees is now widely recognised as being essential in assuring competitive advantage. It is through their staff that universities are able to respond to the challenges of the changing HE environment, embracing concepts such as student centred learning, employability and widening participation.

This chapter serves as an introduction to this research and has four principal aims:

1. to outline the rationale for initiating this research on performance management in HE;
2. to illustrate the context within which the research will be carried out,
3. to define the aims and objectives of the research and
4. to outline of the structure of the thesis.

1.2 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND THE UK AGENDA

Successive Governments (at both UK and national level) have attempted to encourage all business sectors to improve their performance and hence increase their competitive advantage through the use of performance management models such as Charter Mark/Customer Service Excellence (Cabinet Office, 2008); Investors in People (WAG, 2008); European Foundation for Quality Management business excellence model (Wales Quality Centre, 2007), and Best Value (DCLG, 2008). However, in the HE sector, there has been a noticeable variance in take up.

The Independent Review of Higher Education Pay and Conditions (Bett, 1999) highlighted 61 areas for improvement in the sector including that the Funding Councils should consider promoting an initiative to improve people management. Recommendation 54 advises that in particular:

*The management of people needs to be given greater priority at all levels of the HE system – including by Governments.....institutions’ governing bodies and senior management (who need well-planned people strategies alongside academic and research strategies and by personnel departments (bolstered where necessary).*

(Bett, 1999, R.54)

The Future of Higher Education report (DfES, 2003a) tells both a good news and bad news story for HE. With participation rates tripling over the last 25 years, HEIs can be proud of their high student satisfaction ratings, their strong links with businesses and their 40 plus Nobel Prize winners. But whilst much
has been achieved in the sector, there is no room or time for complacency with world wide competitors out-stripping UK investment in HE, the UK research position declining and traditional UK overseas markets being threatened. “The whole system is undoubtedly under severe pressure and at serious risk of decline. Decisions must be taken now to maintain the excellence of the sector as a whole” (DfES 2003, online). This wake-up call must be heeded if UK HEIs are to compete in what is fast becoming a globalised business with borderless EU markets, world-wide mega universities such as the Open University and the University of Phoenix, and the virtual globalisation of the market brought about by the growth of the internet and its academic sub-network Super Janet (Becher and Trowler 2001, p.2).

The four principles of UK public sector reform provide a framework on which the HEIs can begin to address the challenges identified for the sector (HEFCE, 2006):

- **National Standards and a framework of clear accountability**
- **Devolution and delegation to the front line**
- **Flexibility and reduction of red tape; incentives and rewards for good performance; strong leadership and management; high-quality training and development**
- **Expanding choice for the customer and being customer-focused**

And although each HEI is different in history, size, structure, culture, mission and subject mix, what they do share in common are some of the key strategic
challenges – (set out in Figure 1.1) - that they will need to embrace if they are to reverse the threat of decline. How successfully they can do this will depend upon their starting position and their capacity for change.

These challenges are of themselves demanding. With them come increasing expectations of staff in terms of the skills and abilities required to successfully deliver institutional priorities and objectives, in a manner that meets the needs of an increasingly diverse student base. In turn, managers in HE need to be able to demonstrate excellent organisational skills, as well as leadership and people management skills (HEFCE, 2006, p.6).

An evaluation of the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) initiative Rewarding and Developing Staff in Higher Education (2002), found that the profile and standing of Human Resource Management (HRM) had increased in the sector and that there was a greater understanding of the importance of strategically embedding Human Resources (HR) in institutional strategies and plans. However, HEIs report that their three main challenges continue to be keeping up with the thrust of change, ensuring that performance review is embedded into institutional practices and managing poor performance (KPMG, 2005).
Figure 1.1: The Evolving Agenda (Leadership Foundation for Higher Education, 2004, p.7).
1.3 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND THE WELSH DIMENSION

HEIs are publicly accountable - despite their self-governing status. The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) is responsible for funding institutions in Wales to the sum of £415,886,726 for 2007 – 2008 (HEFCW, 2008).

Whilst HEFCW is one of the largest HEI stakeholders, the Better Accountability for Higher Education Report (HEFCE, 2000) identifies 17 other broad stakeholder areas each with varying interests in the management and performance of HEIs. Universities however, argue that the demands placed upon them, by their many stakeholders are becoming excessively burdensome and costly.

Over the last decade, a number of strategic documents have been produced by the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) – (WAG, 2000, 2002b, 2006) urging that “re-configuration and collaboration must be at the heart of the strategy…..as a key mechanism to revitalise the sector and make it internationally competitive” (WAG, 2002a, p.6). Improved performance from within is also recommended:

There is plainly room to improve management practice and expertise, giving it the same attention as is given to academic excellence. We want to see institutions which are continuously and evidently improving, and using techniques such as the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) for the purpose. HE has a responsibility to demonstrate the highest standards of accountability and governance to all its stakeholders. Insofar as institutions find aspects of this to be burdensome, they should look to reconfiguration and collaboration to assist.  

(WAG, 2002a, p.10)
HEFCW (2005a, p.16) also support the re-configuration agenda as being vital to the people and economy of Wales, concluding in their report that Welsh HEIs should be moving towards a “multifaceted collaboration leading in time to a single institution.”

In 2002, all English HEIs were tasked by the HEFCE to develop HR Strategies aimed at addressing a number of issues including “Action to tackle poor performance” (HEFCE 2002, p.27). In 2003, HEFCW followed suit requiring all Welsh HEIs to do the same (HEFCW, 2003, online). Whilst recognising the overall strengths of the Welsh sector’s strategies, HEFCW also noted some common areas of weakness including the use of non-specific, poorly-focused objectives and a lack of measurable targets. They recommended that energies be diverted towards the development of SMART outcome-focused indicators for measuring progress and performance more effectively (HEFCW 2005b, W05/15HE).

It is within this context that the research question begins to emerge - what can HEIs do to manage performance effectively and how will they engage staff in the process?

1.4 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND THE UNIVERSITY OF LLAREGGUB

The University of Llareggub (UL) is a post-92 constituent institution of the federal University of Wales. Taught degree-awarding powers (TDAPs) were
attained in 1996, but under the terms of UL’s membership, these powers are held in abeyance and students receive University of Wales awards.

With over 10,000 students and an annual budget in excess of £55 million, UL is, in terms of size, in the middle range of the UK university sector. UL's portfolio of programmes and subjects identify it as focused upon professional, and vocationally relevant HE and on research which is predominantly applied in nature. The range of programmes on offer, extend from HNC/HND level to degree and postgraduate level, with an increasing number of postgraduate research students.

The proportion of part-time students continues to grow, as UL becomes a prime focus in Llareggub and Mid Wales for Continuing Professional Development (CPD). UL has also experienced a significant increase in the proportion of international students (including EU) in recent years, with more than 900 students from over 128 countries enrolled on degree programmes (UL Annual Review 2006/7).

In July 2004, UL’s Board of Governors and Executive Management Group (EMG) jointly agreed a new Vision, Mission, Ethos, and Values statement (see Appendix 1).

UL has over 15 Centres of Excellence, offering applied research and consultancy to business and industry, local and national government across the
UK and worldwide and has also held the Charter Mark for Excellence since 1995.

The headcount of staff (full-time equivalent – fte) at 31 December 2007 was circa 1100 staff. The UL gender profile remains relatively constant across the university at approximately 46% male and 54% female. The age profile shows that 31% of support staff and 45% of academic staff were over the age of 50 at 31 December 2007.

Circa 10% of UL’s staff were from a recognised ethnic minority (using census categories) and as at 31 December 2007, 3.6% of UL’s staff had declared a disability and 3.6% were Welsh speaking.

Over the last eight years, the organisation has made considerable progress in relation to managing performance and the journey has been documented as a case study in Chapter Four as part of this research.

1.5 PERFORMANCE ISSUES IN UNIVERSITIES

Guest and Clinton (2007, p.6), describe the structure of universities as:

….distinctive, with semi-autonomous, loosely-coupled departments, often highly fragmented internally into lone scholars or small teams with shared interests and in which management is viewed by most as a burden or interference to be avoided and minimised where at all possible. Among many academics, individuality, idiosyncrasy, innovation and on occasion, risk-taking is highly valued, whereas administrative functions such as human resources share a common concern for consistency, order and system of regulation and control that emphasise risk-avoidance.
Consequently, the starting point for successful performance management in HEIs is both uncertain and unpredictable. There are also a number of other factors that appear to impede the progress of the performance management agenda.

### 1.5.1 Elite v Widening Access

There is an elite versus widening participation conundrum. The massification of universities is becoming more evident with the continuing increase in student numbers as universities are expected to relinquish their eliteness and become more vocationally orientated to encourage wider participation (Becher and Trowler, 2001, p.2). With the Government’s target of 50% of 18–30 year olds to be engaged in HE by 2020, universities are required to open their doors to more non-traditional students – who often require extra support from staff. At the same time, universities have to ensure that they do not compromise their academic standards and that their student achievement rates are maintained or improved. This has necessitated the design of new progression routes into HE, through for example, the introduction of Foundation Degrees.

### 1.5.2 Uniqueness

When comparing themselves to the wider business context, HEIs often consider themselves to be special or unique. Performance management tools commonly used in other sectors are frequently not thought to be appropriate to the HE sector, Demonstrated by the contextualisation of the MCI Management Standards for HE (Compton, 2002); the HE version of the EFQM (Sheffield Hallam, 2003) and the creation of the Higher Education Role Analysis (HERA)
1.5.3 Autonomous v Conglomerate

On the one hand, there are expectations that universities will become more self-sufficient and competitive and on the other hand, the WAG is pressing for Welsh Universities to collaborate or preferably merge. Neither are necessarily invalid exercises. However, streamlining and re-structuring to remain autonomous and competitive is often a lengthy process which not only immobilises the organisation, but can also affect the motivational levels of staff. On the other hand, the considerable time spent engaging in merger discussions tends to result in organisational “planning blight” (HEFCW, 2005a, p.12) for the duration of the exercise.

1.5.4 Reactivity

The constitution of universities is not always conducive to quick response or speedy action. Due to their public accountability, there are numerous Boards and Committees that need to approve or ratify initiatives or decisions, sometimes taking up to a full year as part of the corporate planning cycle. The Vice-Chancellor (during Corporate Induction sessions) sometimes likens UL to a large ship - slow to stop or turn around. Efforts to improve performance at organisational, school or unit level does not often take visible effect, especially in relation to the league tables, until at least two years later.
1.5.5 Management Information

Meaningful management information is fundamental to any decision making process and HEIs have a statutory requirement to provide specific data, for example on staff, students and finance to various external sources such as the Higher Education Statistical Agency (HESA) or HEFCW. However, data collection and the subsequent use of data across UL can be problematic for example, student data relating to admissions is collected using the University and Colleges Admissions System (UCAS) categories, whereas data pertaining to students and staff collected in Registry and HR utilises the 2001 Census categories. Although the external agencies get the data they require, UL is unable to report in any meaningful way for example, on a student’s progression by gender, race or disability throughout the student cycle – application, offer, acceptance, progression, award and employability - as the data is not comparable. The issue of not applying a consistent methodology across the organisation when separating out ethnic minority students in relation to Home, European Union and Overseas students, further complicates matters when trying to extract and interpret meaningful data. In addition, some schools and units keep their own database records which again, are not linked to any corporate systems. Some of the corporate systems require upgrading.

1.5.6 Relationship with Trade Unions

The performance of a university can also be influenced by its relationships with the Trade Unions. Unison and the University and Colleges Union (UCU) are the most commonly recognised for negotiating purposes in HE. UL has in place formal consultation and negotiating processes conducted through Common
Interest Groups and the Joint Consultative Committee. Unison have more than 1.3 million members working across the public services (Unison, 2008). Their representatives and support staff members at UL seem more comfortable with the performance management agenda and there has been little resistance to the introduction of performance management interventions and processes, such as HERA and Staff Appraisal. UCU (2008) - who represent more than 120,000 academics across the UK - seem to be more reticent of performance management interventions in HE, referring to the performance management agenda at UL as creeping managerialism. Consequently, it can be both time consuming and difficult for UL to implement meaningful or effective performance management tools such as performance appraisal. Johnson (2006) writes about some of the difficulties around addressing performance issues:

….. I’m sure many people can identify indolent colleagues who seem to have a paltry research output, take little part in administration and avoid all but the lightest of teaching duties. Universities appear to be powerless to deal with those who seem immune to normative pressures from their colleagues to contribute. The result is an underclass of committed academics who take up the slack created by freeloaders, often at the expense of their research career. Unfortunately, I don’t believe that universities have yet grasped the importance of encouraging contribution through rewarding teaching and administration and unions don’t seem to appreciate the damage caused by their inability to be critical of members who damage the careers of their colleagues through inactivity.

(Johnson, 2006, p.15)

1.5.7 Academic v Support

The divide between academic and support staff (or academic and non-academic) is apparent to those who work in the sector and the persistent use of such terminology seems to perpetuate the difference. Taylor, Principal of Newman College reports:
I would certainly like to see more development of the growing integration of teams, within and across ‘traditional’ boundaries. Somebody I was speaking to last week referred to an academic colleague as ‘one of the non-admin people’ because she was tired of being referred to as non-academic. I’d like to see those lines continue to dissolve, with more recognition of the value of different groups of professionals.

(Huxley, 2005, p.7)

It is not always clear what causes the rift. Certainly, some of the language and terminology used within the two staff groups can differ and there are conceptual differences, for example the student as customer paradox – can the customer always be right when in practice there is a student/teacher relationship? Support staff appear more comfortable with hierarchical management arrangements and the structure of many of the support units reflect this. Conversely, academic staff appear to prefer much flatter structures with more collegiate arrangements, devoid of words like manager, line manager or compliance. However, this can present problems when there is only one person - such as the Dean of School - with the authority to manage the performance of the whole school and those within it.

1.6 TERMINOLOGY

It is acknowledged that the term manager does not sit well within an academic institution.

There is no clear definition of who is and who is not a manager in most institutions…..the word manager is often not referenced in the job titles of individuals who are managers for example, Head of School, Dean, Senior Administrator. In addition many academics who take on managerial responsibilities consider it a career inhibiting period since it distracts their attention away from teaching and research.

(PCS Limited 2002, p.22)
However, for the purposes of this research, the term *manager* is used in its broadest sense, referring to any person who has responsibility for managing performance at either a strategic and/or operational level.

The real name of the university has been altered to the University of Llareggub as a measure of protecting its identity. All names used during the performance conversations with managers have been changed, as have some references to the gender of specific staff members.

### 1.7 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this research was to investigate the concept of performance management in a post-92 HEI, with particular reference to current approaches and practices including how the employee relationship is managed by senior and middle managers throughout the course of the employee life-cycle (ELC). The information gathered will assist in progressing the performance management agenda that HEIs have been asked to address through their HR Strategies.

The objectives of this research were to:

- Undertake a critical review of the relevant literature and develop a unified theoretical HRM/HRD performance management framework.
- Case study the development of the organisation over an eight year period, highlighting some key performance interventions and milestones.
• Establish the overall understanding of performance management and how this is translated into practice, by exploring the perspectives, expectations and contributions of the university’s ‘managers’ at three levels:

  ➢ *The Executive Management Group (EMG):* who have a strategic responsibility for managing and accounting for the performance of the institution;

  ➢ *The Senior Managerial Group (SMG):* who have a strategic and operational responsibility for managing the performance of their particular schools/units;

  ➢ *The Middle Managers:* who have a day-to-day operational responsibility for ensuring that standards and levels of performance are met and maintained by teams and individuals within their particular school/unit.

• Critically analyse areas of congruence and dissonance between the three levels of management group, seeking to identify potential areas for improvement and making appropriate recommendations for action in relation to performance management.

• Seek to develop an appropriate HRM/HRD model for managing performance within a post-92 HEI.
1.8 RESEARCH OUTCOMES

It is hoped that the outcomes of the research will contribute in three ways:

- **Theory**: to add to the current performance management debate generally and/or in HE;
- **Practice**: to contribute to the development of HR frameworks, strategies and interventions designed to enhance the effectiveness of performance management within the HE environment and wider, and
- **Methodology**: to enhance/contribute to ethnographic studies in general.

A detailed explanation of the research methodologies and methods which aim to support the achievement of the research objectives will be provided in Chapter Three.
1.9 OVERVIEW OF THESIS

This thesis is structured around eight chapters which will cover the following:

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<th>An introduction, setting out the context and rationale for this research. Outlines the performance management agenda at UK and local level, presents some of the barriers to performance management and describes the aims and objectives for the research and intended outcomes.</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>CHAPTER TWO</td>
<td>This chapter will critically analyse the relevant literature in relation to performance management, with particular reference to HR policy and practice and the management of the employee life-cycle in higher education. It will draw on the previous work of esteemed researchers and practitioners in order to develop a unified theoretical HRM/HRD performance management framework suitable for use in a post-92 higher education institution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER THREE</td>
<td>Chapter Three sets out the methodology and methods. It will look at the advantages and disadvantages of the methods employed and explain the reasons for their choice and deployment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHAPTER FOUR</td>
<td>This chapter, will seek to map out the university’s performance management journey from 2000 – 2008 as part of this action research. It will highlight some of the key performance interventions and milestones that have been implemented over the years such as Investors in People, Human Resources Strategy, National Framework Agreement, Senior Management Development etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHAPTER FIVE</td>
<td>This chapter will provide an analysis of the data collected (performance conversations) during one to one interviews with members of the EMG. It will attempt to identify areas of congruence and dissonance and emerging themes in relation to the strategic management of performance in a post-92 HEI.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER SIX</td>
<td>This chapter will provide an analysis of the data collected (performance conversations) during one to one interviews with the SMG - Deans of Schools and Heads of Units. It will attempt to identify areas of congruence and dissonance, and emerging themes in relation to the strategic and operational management of performance within their particular schools and units.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER SEVEN</td>
<td>Chapter Seven will provide an analysis of the data collected following a survey of Middle Managers. It will attempt to identify areas of congruence and dissonance, and emerging themes in relation to the day-to-day operational management of performance within their particular areas of responsibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER EIGHT</td>
<td>Will seek to compare the data from the three levels of management and will explore any areas of congruence and dissonance between the three groups, as well as highlighting some of the key areas for improvement identified by managers. The chapter will culminate in the development of a performance management model designed to assist managers in managing performance in a post-92 university. Finally, it will seek to bring together a review of the objectives and the main findings from the research. It will evaluate this Action Research, identifying some of the key learning points. It will then draw conclusions from the findings and make recommendations as to what the university can do to improve, where appropriate, levels of performance.</td>
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Chapter Two

Literature Review

Performance Management in Higher Education

April 2009
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CHAPTER TWO

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter One introduced the concept of, and rationale for, performance management in HE, highlighting some of the influences and barriers found in three contexts - the UK agenda, the Welsh dimension and within the University of Llareggub.

This chapter will present a critical review of the performance management literature, taking into consideration some of the models used by organisations for this purpose. It will investigate the latest thinking and findings on performance management and seek to explore how it operates in practice.

Although there is a large amount of literature covering the ‘what is’ and ‘how to’, of HR processes that constitute the Employee Life Cycle (ELC), such as Recruitment and Selection, Induction, Probation, Appraisal, Career Development/Succession Planning and Reward, this review will focus primarily on the link between the different HR processes and performance management. A unified theoretical model will be developed as an outcome of the review, drawing together some of the critical components that make up a performance management framework.
2.2 UNDERSTANDING PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

The Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development (CIPD) identify performance management as the sum total of different elements:

*Fully realised, performance management is a holistic process bringing together many of the elements which go to make up the successful practice of people management, including in particular learning and development. But for this very reason, it is complex and capable of being misunderstood.*

(CIPD, 2008a, online)

Armstrong and Baron (1998) also highlight the complexities of performance management, referring to the phenomenon as a strategic issue, because it is concerned with some of the wider issues affecting the organisation and its longer-term goals and direction. At the same time, they advise that it needs to be integrated so that individual and team objectives are aligned with the organisational plans (particularly those that are HRM/HRD-related) and linked across departments, achieving a coherent approach to the management and development of people. They further assert that performance management is about achieving individual, team or organisational effectiveness through performance improvement emphasizing that it is equally, if not more importantly, concerned with development:

*Performance management is not achievable unless there are effective processes of continuous development. This addresses the core competencies of the organisation and the capabilities of individuals and teams. ‘Performance management’ should really be called ‘performance and development management.’*

(Armstrong and Baron, 1998, p.8)

These definitions signal the need to focus on performance management equally at three levels - organisational, departmental and individual. Performance
management should therefore concern everyone who wants to get the best out of UK HE provision.

Because of the breadth of the subject, performance management and measurement can be regarded as a multidisciplinary activity. Much research into performance management and measurement has previously focused on particular functional areas, such as Management Accounting, Finance, Strategy or HR. It is “relatively recently that performance management from these disparate disciplines has begun to converge and recognise the need for integration into a multidisciplinary approach to managing performance” (Cranfield School of Management, 2007, p.3).

Performance management is holistic, complex and multidisciplinary. It is strategic and yet has to be integrated in such a way that it aligns operationally. Performance management is also concerned with team and individual performance, and their continuing professional development within that context. What therefore are the practicalities of putting in place appropriate performance management systems and processes in HEIs and how can these be utilised by managers to improve performance? The next part of this literature review will examine measuring, reviewing and reporting on performance.

2.3 MEASURING, REVIEWING AND REPORTING ON PERFORMANCE

Osborne and Gaebler (1992), contend that if you measure performance, it can lead to improved services and demonstrate better accountability (see Figure 2.1):
Figure 2.1: Osborne and Gaebler, (1992, p.138) - What Gets Measured Gets Done.

However, performance management is a complex and often contentious part of the performance management process. Berman (2002) contends that 57.5% of organisations report inadequate computer information systems, making the collection of timely and relevant data difficult. Grizzle (2002, p. 365) warns of the “dark side of quantifying work” where human behaviour can sometimes present unintended negative outcomes. Examples cited include that of police officers in Philadelphia, USA, who were found to be downgrading offences so that they could meet their target of “safest city to live in”. Victims of rape, burglary and assault were subsequently unable to claim insurance or
compensation because they had been classified as “threats”, “investigations” and “hospital cases”.

Ammons (2002) argues that performance measurement systems can fall short of expectations because they are often designed to capture fairly meaningless ‘raw workload’ activities - for example the number of student applications received or the number of enquiries made. He argues that these types of measurement (whilst necessary) do not act as a catalyst for performance improvement because they do not inspire managerial thinking. It is only when monthly figures demonstrate an unacceptable level of performance that managers are forced “to consider alternatives to enhance performance” (Ammons, 2002, p.346). Bogue and Hall (2003, p1.) also highlight some of the conundrums around determining appropriate measurements, for more qualitative areas such as Academic Quality:

*Is it measurable or mysterious? Is it to be found in reputation or results? Is it carried out in the perceptions of our academic colleagues and our students, or does it exist independently of their opinion?...Is it found in media rankings or in the knowledge and skill of our graduates? Is it expressed in test scores or does it evade capture by existing performance measures?*

Performance measurement is not a straight-forward process that everyone can agree on and it is argued that some things simply cannot be measured. The Cranfield School of Management (2007, p.5) also make the point that:

*performance measurement includes the development of strategies or objectives, and the taking of actions to improve performance based on the insight provided by the performance measures. This blurs the distinction between performance measurement and performance management.*
2.3.1 Approaches to Performance Measurement

The Audit Commission (2000) map out six principles underlying effective performance measurement:

**CLARITY OF PURPOSE:** Organisations often have a multiplicity of stakeholders including managers, and it is important to identify who requires what information and for what purpose. Understanding these requirements allows organisations to develop meaningful indicators or measures which can help individuals or groups to, amongst other things: make better decisions, benchmark against other organisations, ensure that objectives are being met, monitor the maintenance of standards and identify areas of poor performance.

**FOCUS:** Care should be taken over the design and choice of indicators ensuring that performance information is designed to focus on the priorities of the business, i.e. the key objectives identified in the strategic plan, complemented by day-to-day operational information. The design and choice of indicators or measures should take into account the affect they may have on employee behaviour.

**ALIGNMENT:** The performance measurement system needs to be aligned with the performance management system of an organisation so that the links between national targets, corporate objectives and operational measures can be easily made during performance monitoring and the performance review process.

**BALANCE:** The aggregated set of performance indicators or measures should provide an unbiased view of the organisation’s performance and should include measures from across a range of organisational facets. Care should be taken to ensure that the value of the information gathered is equal to - or more than - the cost of collecting the information.

**REGULAR REFINEMENT:** Keeping the performance indicators and measures up to date so that they meet current requirements is obviously important, but so to is having a consistent set of measures against which differences in performance levels can be measured over a period of time. It is therefore important to get the balance right.

**ROBUST PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:** The performance indicators and measures should be robust enough to withstand scrutiny from internal and external sources. They should also be lucid enough to be understood by those who have to perform to them on a day-to-day basis.
HM Treasury *et al.* (2001, p. 11) concur with these underlying principles, although instead of talking about ‘regular refinement’ (as the Audit Commission (2000) have), they add ‘cost effective’ - as the benefits of the information must balance against the costs - and present the principles slightly differently as follows:

*Focused* on the organisation’s aims and objectives;

*Appropriate* to, and useful for, the stakeholders who are likely to use it;

*Balanced*, giving a picture of what the organisation is doing, covering all significant areas of work;

*Robust* in order to withstand organisational changes or individuals leaving;

*Integrated* into the organisation, being part of the business planning and management processes; and

*Cost Effective* balancing the benefits of the information against the costs.

However, HM Treasury *et al.* (2001), contend that there is more to a performance measurement process than setting focused, aligned, balanced and robust performance indicators. They stress the importance of taking into account the business context (including the culture and values of an organisation) and having in place systems that can track, follow through and evaluate the overall effectiveness of performance against the performance indicators. They also stress the importance of translating strategy into practice through the development of SMART objectives – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timed – affording staff greater ownership. The
suggested components for a successful performance management system are illustrated in Figure 2.2:

![Components of Performance Measurement System](image)

**Figure 2.2: Components of a Performance Measurement System (HM Treasury et al., 2001, p. 23)**

The DTI (2008, p.4) re-enforce this position, recommending that performance measures must be:

- *Meaningful, unambiguous and widely understood*;
- *Owned and managed by the teams within the organisation*;
- *Based on a high level of data integrity*;
- *Such that data collection is embedded within the normal procedures*;
- *Able to drive improvement*;
- *Linked to critical goals and key drivers of the organisation*. 
2.3.2 Types of Measures

The Audit Commission reminds organisations that they need to take different levels and types of measures into consideration:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>USERS</th>
<th>USE</th>
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<tr>
<td>Public and stakeholders</td>
<td>Monitor key priorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government, politicians and senior managers</td>
<td>National publication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public and stakeholders local</td>
<td>Setting and meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>politicians and senior managers</td>
<td>local objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers and staff</td>
<td>Day-to-day management</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 2.3: The Different Users and Uses of Indicators (Audit Commission, 2000, p.8)**

Stakeholder requirements are different for different stakeholder groups and it is important to make clear from the outset, what those requirements are. There also needs to be a cascading link through the different levels (top down and bottom up) so that managers and staff can understand how they contribute, through the work that they do, to operational effectiveness and overall performance of the organisation measured through national indicators. The types of measures that are set against these levels will involve determining Resources, Inputs, Outputs and Outcomes, which in turn have a close relationship to economy, efficiency and effectiveness (see Figure 2.4).
2.3.3 The HE Approach

A climate of public accountability developed during the 1980s within UK HE. The universities themselves, under the auspices of the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals (CVCP) instigated a review, culminating in the Jarratt Report (1985), highlighting the value of performance indicators (PIs) for internal management use and inter-university comparison. A Performance Indicators Steering Group (PISG) was established and in 1999, they published the first set of PIs for the HE sector (HEFCE, 1999), designed to provide a
consistent set of measures and provide reliable information on the nature and performance of the HE sector in the UK.

However, many universities have been critical of the PIs when used in published tables, arguing that in order to compare universities on a like-for-like basis, important differences in circumstances need to be taken into account, if the indicators are to be seen as a valid performance measure (Smith, McKnight and Robin 2000).

In 2004, responsibility for the publication of indicators relating to: access to higher education, non-completion rates for students, outcomes and efficiencies for learning and teaching in universities and colleges, employment of graduates and research output, was passed to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) and the PISG undertook its first formal review of the PIs in 2006-07. As part of the review, a set of criteria were devised so as to be able to assess - with some measure of objectivity – the continued relevance of the existing indicators as well as the validity of any newly-proposed indicators (see Appendix 3).

During the consultation process, most institutions (87) reported that they made some use of the PIs, mainly to compare themselves with similar institutions. A small number also utilised them for more specific purposes, such as strategic planning, retention and widening access strategies, or marketing.
The primary responsibilities of the Governing Body of each HEI are set out in the CUC Governance Code of Practice and General Principles and include:

- approving the mission and strategic vision of the institution, long-term business plans, key performance indicators (KPIs) and annual budgets, and ensuring that these meet the interests of stakeholders, and
- monitoring institutional performance against plans and approved KPIs, which should be, where possible and appropriate, benchmarked against other institutions.

(CUC, 2004, p.5)

Governing Bodies can only devote limited amounts of their time to discharging their duties within their institutions and therefore this time has to be well-focused. A CUC survey found that they have traditionally been presented with voluminous reports consisting of operational minutiae, making it difficult to pick out key issues. In addition, “many institutions are still at a relatively early stage of development of KPIs; while a few have invested considerable thought and effort into the subject (but may not necessarily yet have fully reached a satisfactory position)” (CUC, 2006, p.19). In order to assist governing bodies, a ‘Top Ten’ list of high-level KPIs was developed with an aim of encapsulating the most critical areas of performance for an institution:
Table 2.1: The Top-Ten High-Level KPIs, (CUC, 2006, p. 5)

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Top-level summary indicators (&quot;super KPIs&quot;)</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Institutional sustainability</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Academic profile and market position</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top-level indicators of institutional health</th>
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<tr>
<td>3. The student experience and teaching and learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Knowledge Transfer and relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Financial health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Estates and infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Staff and Human Resource Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Governance, leadership and management</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Institutional projects</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The relationship between the super KPIs and the eight Top-level indicators is flexible enough that they can be adapted according to importance or focus to suit individual institutions. Institutions are also invited to add to the list of KPIs, up to a maximum of 15, where they find gaps. The KPI framework also suggests devising second-level indicators to support the assessment of the high-level KPIs and recommends the use of a “Traffic Light” style of presentation – with green to highlight ‘Good’ and red to signal ‘Problematic’. (CUC, 2006, p.7).

Alongside these indicators of performance, universities are also engaged in a number of rigorous and sophisticated processes of assessment to ensure academic quality and standards, carried out by the Quality Assurance Agency.
for Higher Education (QAA), professional, statutory and funding bodies (HEFCE, 2005).

2.3.4 Evaluating the Effectiveness of Performance

Unless there are proper systems in place for collecting data and monitoring, analysing and reporting on the information, then it will not be possible to evaluate performance with any confidence.

The DTI (2008) argue that there are a number of ways to evaluate performance and that even quality-related activities can, with some care, be costed using the P-A-F model that deals with ‘prevention costs’, ‘appraisal costs’ and ‘failure costs’. They contend that expenditure on prevention and improvement activities should reap benefits, such as: a more productive workforce, reduced failure costs, lower appraisal costs, increased customer base and market share.

**Prevention costs:** which are incurred before actual operation and can therefore be planned in advance, for example:

- Setting specifications for products, outcomes or service requirements; the use of processes such as the Balanced Scorecard, iIP, Charter Mark or EFQM, or training in preparation of activity, or as part of the maintenance.

**Appraisal costs:** which are associated with the stakeholders’ evaluation of the organisation’s products, outcomes or services, for example:
• Carrying out quality audits for example QAA, audits in relation to the maintenance of standards such as Charter Mark and IiP and assessment of products, outcomes or service requirements against the specifications such as the National Student Satisfaction Survey.

**Failure costs:** which are incurred either before the product or service reaches the customer (internal), or are not detected until after transfer to the customer (external), for example:

• Internal: Poor organisation, communication or doing unnecessary work, reworking to rectify errors or mistakes;
• External: the costs involved in handling and resolving stakeholder complaints.

### 2.4 THE LINK BETWEEN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

The management discipline most associated with performance management is HR – because of its link with people and their contribution to organisational performance (Cranfield School of Management, 2007). CIPD declare that:

> Today’s HR department aims to deliver a stronger, more competitive business, and is judged on its success in meeting business targets including reducing costs, improving customer service, quicker delivery and product innovation. Partnering makes HR accountable to the business, and expects HR to add real value. CIPD (2007a, online).

However, HR is not the sole territory of the HR practitioner. All managers, supervisors and team leaders need to be concerned with how employees are recruited, what work they are required to do and how well they are doing it.
Managers therefore need to have the skills, knowledge and ability to performance manage people effectively within a framework of HR strategy, policy and procedure.

Earlier models of the HRM territory and, in particular, the Harvard Model of Human Resource Management (see Figure 2.5) start to map out the importance of stakeholder interests and situational factors in influencing HRM policy choice. Beer et al. (1984) emphasize the importance of taking into account the broad spectrum of stakeholder interests when designing HR policies and practices. They warn that not doing so results in long-term organizational failure. Although ‘Performance’ is not explicitly mentioned in the model, the HR outcomes of Commitment, Competence, Congruence and Cost Effectiveness contributing to the longer-term well-being of the individual, organisation and society could be described as ‘performance in action’:

- Do the HR policies and decisions of the organisation engender the commitment of individuals to their roles and the organisation?
- Do the HRM/HRD policies and practices serve to attract, retain and develop employees with the right competence, i.e. skills, knowledge and attributes?
- Are the chosen HRM/HRD policies congruent with the actual practices of the organisation and hence the experiences of staff?
- Do the implementation costs of the HRM/HRD policies and practices offset the costs of items such as staff turnover, absenteeism or poor performance, i.e. cost effectiveness? (Hendry, 1995)
It could be argued that the components in this model remain equally as valid in today’s business world because HR policies and procedures continue to exist as a means of formalising people management arrangements across an organisation. They are usually introduced in response to the need to comply with legislation or EU Directives, promote organisational initiatives (such as well-being), or standardise internal arrangements such as flexible working. For policies to be effective, CIPD (2007b, online) states that they should be:

- Linked to the business strategy with a definite purpose for their creation;
- Complementary - working together to reinforce the company image;
- Flexible - able to adapt to changes in strategy and direction;
• Open and transparent;
• Suited in tone to the culture of the organisation;
• Developed through the involvement of employees and interested stakeholders;
• Communicated to all employees;
• Easily understood, written in Plain English and containing no jargon;
• Accessible in a format employees will use;
• Practical and enforceable – with logical implementation;
• Supported by managers – including support from the senior managers.

CIPD (2007b, online)

Although it is generally accepted that “by adopting ‘bundles’ of HR practices employers are likely to improve business performance” (CIPD, 2007b, online), it can be problematic choosing the right combination of policies. MacDuffie (1995) highlights the impact that organizational logic has on the choice of HR policies that go into the bundle arguing that different organisational logics, such as mass or flexible production, require different HR practices.

MacDuffie (1995, p.9) also states that “implicit in the notion of a ‘bundle’ is the idea that practices within bundles are integrated and internally consistent, and that ‘more is better’ with respect to the impact on performance, because of the overlapping and mutually reinforcing effect of multiple practice”, for example providing multiple ways in which employees can gain new skills: external courses, job rotation, on-the-job training, e-learning.

Guest et al. (2004, p.2) espouses the key HRM policy goals as being: strategic integration, quality, flexibility and commitment and the importance of “relating the conceptual analysis of the goals of an HR system to an appropriate set of practices” so that the bundles fit with, and elicit the required behaviours.
associated with, for example, high performance, high commitment or high involvement systems. This issue of fit is further explored by Marchington et al. (2004) who contend that any inconsistency or incongruence in perceived or actual HR practices can lead to dissent and dissatisfaction, thereby reducing the overall effectiveness of the bundle. The bundle of HR practices therefore, have to be able to operate synergistically – for example, there is little value encouraging employee involvement if ideas are scorned or there is no forum for sharing them.

Monks and Loughnane (2006) found that HR systems also need to be considered at different levels, rather than as unitary entities, as the way in which HR systems were enacted at corporate level and business unit level were sometimes found to clash. The importance of preparatory work – particularly in terms of eradicating old practices before introducing the new - should not be underestimated.

The CIPD published the findings of some significant research (Purcell, 2003) Four important outcomes emerged. First, that successful organisations had “a clear sense of mission underpinned by values and a culture expressing what the firm is and its relationship with its customers and employees” (Purcell et al., 2003, p.13). This feature, which they named “The Big Idea” (Purcell, 2003, p.13), was found to be embedded throughout the organisations. It was well established and the company values were encapsulated in the work that was done and the way that people behaved thereby linking relationships between customers (both internal and external) through a consistent reinforcement of the
company values – “a sort of glue binding people and processes together” (Purcell et al., 2003, p.13). In most cases, these high-performing organisations managed and measured their performance utilising tools, such as Kaplan and Norton’s Balanced Scorecard (Balanced Scorecard Institute, 2007), so that although performance was measured across different business attributes (such as customers, employees, operational excellence and contribution to the community) it was done so in such a way as to integrate the organisation’s values, business and decision-making processes both horizontally and vertically throughout the organisation, rather than being used as an isolated number crunching-exercise.

Second, the way that HR Policies are enacted by line managers is critical. Recently, line managers have been given greater responsibility for HR management and hence the quality of the employment relationship is crucial in securing (or not securing) high levels of job satisfaction and organisational commitment. The management style – the way line managers control or direct what people do, how they live “The Big Idea” (Purcell, 2003, p.13) and their ability to translate the HR policies into best practice are all factors that can spark discretionary behaviour in employees.

Third, there appears to be a distinct relationship between employee attitudes and HR policies and practices. Levels of commitment were found to be higher in those organisations that not only had strong organisational values, but also a range of HR policies and practices that mirrored the values for example work-life balance support, involvement, communication, career progression
opportunities, and the relationship with the manager. Companies with weaker values tended to demonstrate lower levels of commitment and had vaguer HR drivers such as “openness” (Purcell, 2004, p.8).

Fourth, Purcell (2004, p.3) argues, is that “something must persuade, induce, cajole, or encourage employees to do more or do things better or more innovatively both individually and in working with others than they otherwise would or were doing in the past.” Boxhall and Purcell (2003) put forward the notion that: Performance is a function of Ability, plus Motivation, plus Opportunity – \( P = f(A, M, O) \). For some employees, the Ability, Motivation and Opportunity (AMO) are undoubtedly interconnected, for others it is likely that just one element is catalyst enough to produce discretionary behaviour.

Using the AMO equation, the research team were able to identify 11 HR policies which they contend produce discretionary behaviour and hence improve performance. These are illustrated in Figure 2.6 and are reliant on two factors being in place:

- + Values, culture – The Big Idea
- + Line managers – bringing policies to life
Purcell (2004, p.1) concludes that although there is “no one type of HRM which suits every organisation – the key is to find what is most appropriate in context”

He advises:
If we had one choice on what organizations should do to improve HR and build better links with performance, it would be improve front line effectiveness in HR. The role line managers play in people management, backed by strong values which indicate what behaviours are expected, are the core ingredients for ‘HR Advantage’ through organizational process advantage (Purcell, 2004, p.12)

Examination of performance management best practice, nationally and internationally suggests five characteristics of high-performing organisations (Cabinet Office, 2004). These are illustrated below:

Figure 2.7: Five Characteristics of High Performing Organisations (Cabinet Office, 2004, p.34)

This model purports that:

1. High-performing organisations are able to collect valid and real-time data. They then invest significant resource into analysing the data so that
strengths and weaknesses can be identified and action can be taken before smaller issues grow into larger problems.

2. Those companies who are capable of removing barriers to improving performance possess “can do cultures” (Cabinet Office, 2004, p.34) and have a strong sense of vision and clear direction. Staff are encouraged to try new approaches, which in return, promotes a flow of new ideas and innovative practices.

3. Ownership and accountability are two of the main components of successful performance management. Staff need to be held accountable (and importantly feel accountable) for their delivery. Performance contracts with clear outcomes – rather than inputs or activity measures - are vital in setting out expectations, as are understood reporting lines.

4. The Cabinet Office (2004) contend that although organisations should have clear performance management review systems in place, it is even more important to monitor performance on a regular basis, by having in place processes for regular review such as team meetings or management involvement, where senior managers can observe for themselves how something works on-the-job. This provides opportunities for challenging the status quo, providing specialist advice and support thereby ensuring that performance management and problem-solving have a direct link.
5. Performance rewards and sanctions are important in reinforcing achievements and success. They need to be credible, transparent and widely understood across the whole organisation, consistently applied and focused on outcomes.

In parallel, Armstrong and Ward (2005) claim that there are seven main elements to effective performance management, some of which map directly against those shown in the Cabinet Office (2004) model:

![Diagram of the Seven Key Elements of Effective Performance Management](image)

**Figure 2.8: The Seven Key Elements of Effective Performance Management, (Armstrong and Ward, 2005, p.11)**
Their findings highlight the importance of taking into account each of the seven elements:

The **Process** by which individual performance is guided, assessed and rewarded is critical because it sends a highly-visible message to people about what is important and valued in the organisation. It is important to focus on the message, rather than spending too much time ‘revising and tweaking’ the process – possibly at the expense of other high-impact activities. This position re-enforces that of characteristic four in the Cabinet Office (2004) model.

**People Management and Capability** – Armstrong and Ward (2005) advise that organisations must ensure that managers implement performance management systems consistently across the organisation. Managers need to be able to elevate the performance of those around them and their interpersonal skills and behaviour will impact on their ability to do this – (either well or not well). Any training therefore, needs to focus on people management skills and on helping managers to change their behaviour rather than training them to be ‘performance management process’ experts;

**Motivation** is often a forgotten and rarely-discussed element in the performance management equation, but in keeping with the Purcell (2003) model, the extent to which managers are able to unlock discretionary effort amongst employees is critical in raising performance levels. Managers need to be advocates of the performance management process, ensuring that objectives are also motivational rather than being purely focused on control and
alignment. They also need to be mindful that the quality of the conversations during the process can either motivate or demotivate;

**Measurement and Reward** - the indicators or measures that are used to assess a) individual performance and b) organisational effectiveness can be debilitating if they are not right, leading to confusion, inconsistencies and debates about ratings and rankings rather than optimising the powerfulness of the performance management process as a vehicle for performance improvement through feedback and motivation. This view supports characteristics one and five in the Cabinet Office (2004) model.

Rather than being regarded as the guardians of the process, the **Role of HR** practitioners should be focused on influencing managers to take charge of the process. Armstrong and Ward (2005) argue that often, too much effort is directed towards compliance issues. Emphasis needs to be placed on those parts of the performance management system - such as the quality of the process - that make the most difference to performance.

Assumptions are often made that performance management makes a difference. However, in line with the Cabinet Office (2004) findings, Armstrong and Ward (2005) also contend that in reality, there is often insufficient data to check these assumptions – either because data is not collected or because the right data is not available. They purport that in a **Learning Organisation**, organisations are able to make the link between individual performance and organisational outcomes through objectively reflecting and learning from their
own performance management experience, building on what works best, and addressing identified barriers where necessary;

**Clarity of purpose and the Role of Culture** within an organisation will affect the extent to which performance management resonates and is congruent with the broader culture of the organisation in which it is being applied. A performance management system that is not delivering often fails because of organisational shortcomings, such as a mismatch between espoused values and incongruent behaviours, or a lack of clarity over direction, priorities or standards. Aligning the performance management process with the direction of the organisation is therefore essential, but it is important to remember that although performance management will support organisational change, it will not be the exclusive or main driver of it (Armstrong and Ward, 2005).

### 2.5 THE ROLE OF THE LINE MANAGER IN PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

McCaffery (2004, p.3) contends that although universities have some unique features: *the autonomy of the individual scholar; the precedence of subject over institutional loyalty; the strength of tradition and the cult of the ‘expert’*, he claims that universities are not so atypical that they need to be managed in special ways. *Indeed our propensity for insularity does us no favours either in how we manage our universities, or in seeking to exercise influence in broader political circles*. In an interview with Chambers (2005), Sir Michael Bichard concurs with this view stating that HE:
seems to me to be an introspective world, which persists in thinking it has characteristics which are very different from elsewhere. I think for instance, that the collegiality notion is exaggerated – people do expect some leadership, they don’t really want endlessly to be debating ‘where next?’

(Chambers 2005, p.6)

2.5.1 HE Leadership and Management Conundrum

In chapter one (1.6, Terminology), reference was made to the lack of clear definition (in academic circles) as to who was, or was not, a ‘manager’, further complicated by the absence of the word management in ‘academic’ job titles and the understanding that many academics regard managerial responsibilities as career inhibiting (PCS Ltd., 2002). Despite this, there are a convincing number of ‘academic managers’ found across institutions. Oshagbemi (1997, p.113), when surveying teaching staff across 23 UK HEIs, found that 12 % (69) of the 566 university teachers who responded “held managerial posts as head of department or division, director of school, dean of faculty, provost or head of unit e.g. an institute or centre”, with a further 26 % (150) who held other supervisory or middle management posts such as “year tutor, chairperson of a research group, project coordinator, director of undergraduate programmes”. Although the study did not include middle managers the overall findings concluded that “managers in academic institutions derive greater job satisfaction from their jobs than the other academics” (Oshagbemi, 1997, p. 121).

Purcell et al. (2003) found that the quality of the relationship between individuals and their line managers was critical in securing (or not securing) high levels of job satisfaction and organisational commitment resulting in discretionary effort.
It is now recognised that front line managers - sometimes referred to as middle managers – have a pivotal role in enacting HRM/HRD policies and practices, but Hutchinson and Purcell (2007, p.10) contend that:

There can be a wide gap between policy and practice that is partly attributable to poor line management behaviour….some managers lack the appropriate skills and find it hard to differentiate performance or dislike having a ‘difficult conversation’. Managers may resent the bureaucracy involved, find it time consuming, or simply lack commitment.

However, regardless of this critical role, they are unlikely to have had any formal management development and are often promoted from within. In an interview with Huxley (2005a), Professor Richard Chait states:

It’s always amazed me that we spend our lives in universities teaching people to practice professions (and I include ‘science’ in that), that we train people in methods of inquiry, but that we don’t put that into practice in developing the people who lead and manage our institutions. It’s folly to say that you can lead a university based on experience or desire only. It’s like an academic in my discipline saying ‘I’ve always had a hankering for physical chemistry, so I’ll just start now.’ What kind of signal are we sending out by saying ‘if you manage in this organisation you need no preparation’?

(Huxley, 2005a, pp.10 – 11)

Whilst there is a much clearer definition of who is a manager and who is not in support staff structures within HEIs, Professor John Taylor, in an interview with Huxley (2005b) maintains that HEIs are somewhat unwilling to draw upon in-house knowledge and expertise from across the university because of what he calls the “unfortunate separation between academic and support activity”. Having moved from management to academy he has worked on both sides of the divide and fully supports any developments that bring about “closer working relationships founded on mutual confidence and professional respect”. As an academic leader, Professor Taylor considers that his knowledge of professional
administration has stood him in good stead and extols the benefits of mixed
development programmes where both academic and support managers can
foster better links through “focused research and reflective practice” (Huxley,
2005b, p.12).

2.5.2 Line Management Responsibilities

The CIPD (2008b) report that the responsibilities of line managers would
typically include:

- people management
- managing operational costs
- providing technical expertise
- organisation of work allocation and rotas
- monitoring work processes
- checking quality
- dealing with customers/clients
- measuring operational performance

The 2006 IRS survey – HR roles and responsibilities – found that 21.9% of
respondents had devolved some of the more ‘traditional’ HR work, such as
grievance and discipline, coaching and carrying out performance appraisals, to
line managers (Crail, 2006). In fact nearly 95% of organisations now expect
their line managers to review and monitor the performance of the people they
manage (Wolff, 2008). To facilitate this process of devolved responsibility,
organisations had often introduced new online integrated HR and payroll
systems featuring a self-service access facility for line managers (Crail 2006).
Some front-line managers however, report that they feel “dumped on by HR”
(Hutchinson and Purcell, 2007, p.12) and that their workload has increased as a
result of having to take on this devolved work.
Glover (2003, p.46) makes reference to what she terms “player-managers” - professionals who are promoted into managerial positions of responsibility because of their technical expertise. This requires them to balance what could be described as two full-time jobs – “producer” and “manager of people and processes” (Glover, 2003, p. 46). They are accountable for the results and yet they receive little training in people management techniques. Thwarted by their inability to motivate and engage with staff, “player-managers react the only way they know how – by doing more themselves, working longer hours and veiling their growing frustration” (Glover, 2003, p. 46).

Greenhalgh (2003) asserts that most organisations are poorly integrated, and are underperforming because of their propensity to focus on particular areas of functionality rather than the performance of the organisation as a whole. He contends that the HR function should be taking a leading role in coordinating and implementing strategy across the organisation and diagnosing organisational shortcomings – a more cost effective option than engaging consultants to carry out the exercise. Some of the key questions that HR should be addressing are:

- *Is the strategy well-understood, and does everyone ‘buy into it’?*
- *Are organisational processes optimized or is there a need for re-engineering?*
- *Is the company as lean as it could be?*
- *Is the current organisational structure helpful or is it getting in the way?*
- *Is the workforce adequately skilled, motivated and directed?*
- *Is the firm capitalising on potential technological advances?*
- *Are employees appropriately empowered to pursue continuous improvement and to take the initiative?*

(Greenhalgh, 2003, CIPD Master Class B6)
2.6 MANAGING PERFORMANCE AT ORGANISATIONAL LEVEL

Numerous management techniques have sought to influence people’s performance; these have included direct supervision, appraisal meetings and performance-related pay. However, what is special about the concept of ‘performance management’ or, still better, a ‘performance management system’ (the latter term is sometimes taken to be implicit in the former) is that these various initiatives are systematically linked together in a conscious and planned way. Moreover, they are designed to be mutually reinforcing and to align as much organisational activity as possible with the intended strategy.

(Storey, 2002, p.322)

It is against this background, that a number of performance management frameworks, standards and models have been developed over the years, to assist in improving performance either holistically across an organisation, or through focusing on specific aspects of performance.

2.6.1 Organisational Development (OD) Approaches and Tools

The Organisational Development Higher Education group (ODHE) define Organisational Development as “a set of explicit processes carefully planned and implemented to benefit the performance of the organisation as a whole” (Chambers et al., 2007, p.4). They assert that universities have been using a number of OD tools and approaches to assist them in becoming more self-sufficient in managing and effecting change, including: Investors in People, the Excellence Model, Charter Mark, Balanced Scorecard, ISO accreditation, Dashboard, HEFCE Self-Assessment Tool and a Talent Management Model.
2.6.2 The European Foundation for Quality Management – Excellence Model

Although the EFQM model (see Appendix 4) is used extensively across Europe (Sheffield Hallam University, 2003), its use in the Higher Education sector has been described as limited by the Higher Education Staff Development Agency (HESDA, 2002) although they do allude to the expectation that this will become a growth area over the next decade. Conversely, Temple (2005) argues that although HE tends to adopt management fads just as the corporate sector and government are discarding them, the failure of the EFQM in HE is virtually inevitable.

In a drive to redress the limited take up, the Consortium for Excellence in Higher Education was established to evaluate the benefits of applying the EFQM –
Excellence model to the HE sector. The research carried out at the centre, based at Sheffield Hallam University, culminated in the production of a HE version of the EFQM Excellence Model which includes additional examples, support and guidance for the sector and is fully endorsed by the EFQM. Several universities, including: Durham, Salford, De Montfort, Liverpool John Moores, University of Central Lancashire, are now engaged in various EFQM approaches (Thackwray et al., 2005).

For HEIs, there are a number of identified value-added benefits to using the model, but particularly because it encompasses some of the other recognised models as illustrated below:

![Figure 2.10: How does EFQM fit with other models? Promoting Business Excellence (Quality Scotland, 2008, online)](image)

Liverpool John Moores University endorses the model stating that “we have taken the view that being an academic institution does not prevent us from aspiring to adopt best management and leadership practice; indeed, we owe it
to our academic core business to provide the very highest quality of strategic direction and management support” (Brown, 2004, p. 4). They highlight some of the benefits they have found in adopting the EFQM model – which they describe as an "enabling" and “non-dogmatic” (Brown, 2004, p. 4) framework – including:

- A confidence to hold up the mirror and accept some of the imperfections;
- A closer sense of team working and involvement of staff in making improvements to operations;
- A gradual cultural change which has facilitated some fairly major changes like the eradication of ineffective committees; and
- The opportunity to make the academic community more aware of the external world and to encourage closer and beneficial external partnerships.

However, Chambers et al. (2007, p.18) found that other universities were not so enthusiastic stating “EFQM doesn’t sit particularly well here” (Anon) and “…not even in the landscape here” (Anon).

2.6.3 The Balanced Scorecard

A well-established and recognised method for cascading aims and objectives down throughout an organisation whilst retaining a link to the Corporate Strategic Plan, is the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) (see Appendix 5). Developed by Kaplan and Norton (1992) the BSC provides an alternative approach to the more traditional financial measures regularly used as the primary and often sole measurement of corporate performance (Balanced Scorecard Institute, 2007).
Robert Gordon University have been using the BSC since 2003 and are advocates of the approach. As Neville Browne, OD Manager, explains:

> As a post-92 university we seem to have a culture that is relatively happy with this approach. The Balanced Scorecard and its contents should be known to all employees; they can view it on the website at any time – it’s a tool that’s ‘open’ in that sense. We know from our employee survey, how staff feel about key issues and, as a consequence, we feel we know how our approach will ‘fit’. We are a university that has some clear focus areas, so having a way of ‘starting at the top’ with strategic direction and measurement of progress and with enough appropriate staff engagement and involvement in the process, seems to work for us. (Thackwray et al., 2005, p.3)

Stewart and Carpenter-Hubin (2001) acknowledge the challenges that exist when trying to translate the complex world of academia onto the BSC not least because of the scepticism that exists in relation to quantitatively measuring a
university’s performance. Their worked example however, demonstrates how this strategic approach to assessment can be adapted to higher education:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example of the Balanced Scorecard and Associated Objectives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Diversity: How well do we broaden and strengthen our community?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student learning experience: How effectively do we transfer knowledge to our students?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic excellence: What is our contribution to the creation of knowledge?</td>
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<td>Outreach and engagement: How effectively do we transfer knowledge to the local, national, and international communities?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resource management: How well do we develop and manage resources?</td>
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</tbody>
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Table 2.2: Example of the BSC and Associated Objectives (Stewart and Carpenter-Hubin, 2001, p.41)

2.6.4 Investors in People

The quality of leadership and management across the UK remains a critical issue for individual employers and the country as a whole. Investors in People research shows that 56% of senior managers believe the country’s management skills undermine its overall productivity. Only 28% of respondents demonstrate any faith on those skills. Only one third of UK employees (34%) see their manager as a role model and nearly a quarter of employees (24%) feel that their line manager takes little or no account of their views or does not consult them when making decisions. Such figures
show the urgency of addressing an issue that acts as a barrier to improving the performance of the UK economy.

(IIP, 2008a, online)

Chambers et al. (2007, p.16) report that IiP (see Appendix 6) is “possibly the most established OD tool in UK higher education, with the sector’s engagement with the standard going back to the 1990s”.

The Investors in People standard is modelled around a business planning cycle of:

- **Plan** – developing strategies to improve the performance of the organisation;
- **Do** – taking action to improve the performance of the organisation;
- **Review** – evaluating the impact on the performance of the organisation.

![Figure 2.12: Investors in People Standard (IiP, UK, 2008b, online)](image-url)
HEIs have been encouraged to take up the IiP standard since it was first recommended in the Dearing Report (1997) and again as one of the recommendations (R57 para, 321) in the Bett (1999) report. Although finding the overall process beneficial, Harris (2000) talks about some of the potential barriers to university engagement with the standard, as use of words such as ‘management’ and ‘staff’ (language barriers); connotations of being sucked into the enterprise economy and the perceived irrelevance of the exercise by academic staff. Despite this, “there are some 35 whole higher education institutions currently recognised as Investor in People with as many again following the more flexible building block approach. In addition, there are several hundred departments or units that have achieved recognition in their own right”. (Thackwray et al., 2005, p.2). However, Chambers et al. (2007, p.17) found that although 56% of respondents with current Organisational Development (OD) initiatives, rate IiP as a significant tool for their current OD practice, some of the longer-term adopters of the standard were beginning to question the continued usefulness of the somewhat costly, external assessment element.

2.6.5 Charter Mark/Customer Service Excellence

The purpose of Charter Mark (see Appendix 7) is to help organisations improve the quality of service that customers receive through better communication and understanding of their needs. It aims to engender a culture of continuous improvement and is a recognised standard that customers should equate with quality services.
However, Swain (2007) is of the opinion that writing a student charter is only the first step in looking after the University’s customers. The University of East London (in an interview with Swain, 2007), contend that universities should be focusing on the service they provide to all their stakeholders - parents, employers, students, staff and the local community, stating that “once you think of them as service users and get over the hurdle of whether they are customers, you get over the semantics and into the essence of it, which is providing good-quality services to whoever happens to need them at the time” (Swain, 2007, online). The University of East London commend the merits of Charter Mark “because it offers a framework to think about all kinds of issues to do with service, from ensuring that staff are well motivated to making Quality Assurance Agency assessments publicly available” (Swain, 2007, online). Morrow (2005, p.18) has used the Charter Mark to improve the library services at Newcastle University. He concurs that the framework “allows you to see clearly where you are in the provision of your services” but recognises that the Charter Mark “is only one way to address improvements in the service”.

2.6.6 The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Management Standards Approach

The HSE state that “work-related stress is a major cause of occupational ill health, poor productivity and human error. That means increased sickness absence, high staff turnover and poor performance in your organisation and a possible increase of accidents due to human error” (HSE, 2007, p.2)
Stress is now widely-recognised throughout the UK for its debilitating consequences and managing the problem is not only a legal requirement under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, but there are also sound business reasons (including moral and ethical considerations) for doing so including:

- Employee commitment to work;
- Staff performance and productivity;
- Accidents caused by human error;
- Staff turnover and intention to leave;
- Attendance levels;
- Staff recruitment and retention;
- Customer satisfaction;
- Organisational image and reputation;
- Potential litigation

(HSE, 2007, p.4)

The Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA) working group which was established to consider the implications of the HSE Management Standards for work-related stress (launched in November 2004), are encouraging all HEIs to adopt the standards “as the safest and simplest way of achieving compliance” (Foulds et al., 2006, p.16). The full UCEA findings are set out in Appendix 8, but essentially require that institutions demonstrate how they meet the six control criteria (Demands, Control, Support, Relationships, Role, Change) and show that systems are in place locally, to respond to any individual concerns.

2.6.7 Choosing the Best Model?

Kendell-Rice and Taylor (2003, p.10), assert that “institutions who are using continuous-improvement strategies, by whatever label, are finding them to be proven methodologies for increasing effectiveness and building institutional
agility”. The important factor in this journey of continuous improvement, is that institutions do not simply adopt a model because they have been directed to do so, but rather, spend some time finding the OD tools and approaches (and there are plenty, including the NSS, QAA Institutional Audit, Change Academy and RAE), that fit best with the educational character, culture and direction of the institution.

2.7 MANAGING PERFORMANCE AT SCHOOL, UNIT OR INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

The CIPD (2008a, online) maintain that to successfully introduce performance management, the following principles must be in place:

- **being clear about what is meant by performance**
- **understanding what the organisation is and needs to be in its performance culture**
- **being very focused on how individual employees will benefit and play their part in the process**
- **understanding that it is a tool for line managers and its success will depend on their ability to use it effectively.**

I&DeA (2008, p.4) advise that performance management is an ideal way to:

- motivate and manage staff
- identify and rectify poor performance at an early stage
- learn from past performance and improve future performance
- increase user and public satisfaction.

Concluding that performance management is simply good management – prioritising activity, making sure that sufficient resources are available, achieving organisational goals and ensuring value for money.
In HE, academics often become managers because they are technically expert, yet they do not always have the appropriate people management skills to support them in this role. Public-sector managers express concerns and frustrations when describing how they manage performance and a number of common themes emerge (Audit Commission, 2002). Managers:

- feel as though their leaders are not interested in the performance agenda and that they are therefore operating in a vacuum;
- are so busy trying to manage the day-to-day service as well as the priorities which seem to come from the top, bottom and sides, that there is no time to learn;
- find that a few members of staff are just not performing well enough and that this is often difficult to tackle in the public sector. “It’s not helped when you see some bad performance at senior level simply not being addressed” (Audit Commission, 2002, p.7);
- find it is difficult to implement any change management strategies to any effect, because staff do not understand that the service has to change.

Torrington et al. (2002) illustrate how employee performance can be managed informally as part of everyday management activities and in particular how it can be used to support the more formal aspects of managing performance such as a performance appraisal system. The model, based on Planning, Supporting and Reviewing Performance is not dissimilar to the underlying principles of the Investors in People standard – Plan, Do, Review:
Figure 2.13: Three Key Aspects of Effective Performance (Torrington et al., 2002, p.298)

Planning performance: stresses the need for the manager and employee to agree expectations at the outset, for example documenting standards and key accountabilities, objectives or targets, using job descriptions, person specifications and agreed competencies. Torrington et al. (2002) suggest that clarity of goals improves employee performance, but even more so, where the employee has been able to contribute to the creation of them. A quintessential part of the planning process is planning the training and development and resources required, to make the achievement of any agreed outcomes realistic.

Supporting performance: requires the manager to take on an enabling role facilitating training and development, providing appropriate resources— including themselves - so they are available to discuss any issues/barriers that the
employee may be experiencing. Coaching (and mentoring) are particularly effective ways for the manager, or other role models, to support performance.

**Reviewing performance:** the process of ongoing review is a joint manager/employee exercise. Without employee engagement, there is often no forewarning if performance outcomes are unlikely to be met. On-going reviews tend to be more informal and can naturally take place when demand arises, rather than having to wait until pre-determined dates. They are an ideal forum for managers to sign off completed objectives and also provide an opportunity to recognise achievement.

This three-stage approach - planning, supporting and reviewing performance - could be viewed as the antidote to all HEI performance management worries, but whilst logical in its approach, it makes a number of assumptions: firstly, that there are organisational systems and processes in place such as up to date job descriptions, induction and staff performance review; secondly, that there are sufficient resources allocated to training and development and thirdly, that managers have the skills and abilities (and the inclination) to engage positively with staff.

The Audit Commission (2002) contend that there are eight ‘performance breakthroughs’ each of which can make a difference to performance. These appear to complement Torrington *et al.* (2002) cycles of planning, supporting and reviewing performance:
Breakthrough One: Show your staff you think performance matters
Managers must make it clear that performance matters through communicating and championing the message through their actions rather than words (Audit Commission, 2002). This of course requires that managers within HE understand their roles and responsibilities.

Breakthrough Two: Join up your thinking and learn
Managers need to take time out to reflect on performance and learn from any mistakes that have been made. They need to elicit feedback from others and use reliable and valid performance information to help them judge whether performance has actually improved. “Review, is often the step in the plan – do – review – cycle of performance management that they completely leave out” (Audit Commission, 2002, p.11).

Breakthrough Three: Take action on what matters most
Managers need to focus on what is really important to the organisation and concentrate on a few key things at a time rather than becoming inundated with a multitude of demands and other priorities. They then need to ensure they have the right people and resources behind them, fully engaged in delivering the chosen priorities (Audit Commission, 2002).

Breakthrough Four: Make national agendas work for you
Rather than viewing national agendas as a burden or add-on, managers need to engage with them in such a way that they transmute into something meaningful to their organisation or department (Audit Commission, 2002).
Breakthrough Five: Sign up your staff

“It is easy to create systems to manage performance but much harder to make people want to use them to bring about change. As one senior manager told us, people are the X-factor. Issues about people are much more important for managing and improving performance than structures or systems. Ambition, drive, goodwill, flexibility and everyone feeling that they are on the same side matter……the most effective things an organisation can do to ‘sign up’ staff, are to:

- Consult staff on how to best improve services;
- Allow people to take responsibility and make them accountable;
- Use plain language;
- Communicate well; and
- Give middle managers support and incentives”

(Audit Commission, 2002, p.19)

Breakthrough Six: Find your own framework

There are benefits from having a bespoke performance framework, tailored to the focus and goals of the organisation. The framework needs to be straightforward enough to “explain what your organisation is about in simple and visual terms to staff and outsiders, what its priorities are and how it measures success” (Audit Commission, 2002, p.26).

Breakthrough Seven: Measure what matters

Evidence suggests that rather than being discerning, some organisations collect data simply because it is collectable. The advice from the study is that “Performance measures need to encourage effort around what is most important” (Audit Commission, 2002, p. 30) and although data is required for national and local accountability purposes, what is critical, is that the inputs and outcomes should align with stakeholder requirements. Data also needs to be interpreted intelligently to ascertain whether actions have led to improvements.
Breakthrough Eight: Help people to perform

“This is about making sure you develop, train and support people to do a well-defined job, with clarity on what good performance looks like. You can achieve much by helping to create a culture that motivates staff and gives them responsibility, and by developing a framework for managing performance that links in individuals through some form of appraisal”

(Audit Commission, 2002, p.32)

Evidently, there are a variety of performance management techniques and solutions available to organisations. What is important, is that organisations consider carefully what will work for them.

2.8 TACKLING ISSUES OF POOR PERFORMANCE

Underperformance to a greater or lesser extent is an issue for 82% of the 139 organisations taking part in the 2008 IRS Managing Employee Performance survey, with 94% of those organisations having to instigate disciplinary proceedings for at least one employee over the previous two years (Wolff, 2008).

Underperformance can manifest itself in a number of ways, absence, failure to meet work objectives and poor standard of work generally constituting the most commonly cited reasons:
However, where managers do not tackle issues of poor performance, it can result in work colleagues having to compensate and HR professionals having to invest more time further on dealing with the consequences. Manzoni and Barsoux (2004, p.4) advocate that “rather than waiting for the relationship to break down….HR managers can take a coaching role upstream.”

A survey carried out in 2007 revealed that staff thought their managers to be less than effective:

- 90% said their boss did nothing about poor performers
- 79% claimed that their boss did not set clear objectives
- 89% said their boss lacked motivation and was unceptive to new ideas

(HRM Guide, 2008, online)
Tulgan (2004) also found that large numbers of managers were disinterested and disengaged from their direct reports, leading to what he terms an ‘Under-Management Epidemic’, a condition in which a manager fails to regularly provide their staff with “the five management basics” which include:

1. clear statements of performance requirements and standard operating procedures,
2. measurable goals, clear parameters and concrete deadlines for work assignments,
3. accurate monitoring of performance,
4. feedback and guidance, and
5. fair distribution of rewards and detriments.

Tulgan (2004, online)

Conversely, 39% of managers complain that it is employees who are underperforming and yet 40% of employees argue that their manager is ignoring the issue and does not take any action to address the underperformance (IiP UK, 2005).

Bevan and Huggett (2007) assert that performance management research tends to focus on either the underachievers or star performers, but is relatively silent about the vast majority of staff who lie between. They describe these staff as the “Heart of the Diamond” (HOD) or the “glue that holds the organisation together” (Bevan and Huggett, 2007, online). Their work is not so outstanding that they would be classified as innovative or exceptional, but they quietly and reliably get on with their work and give no cause for complaint – a performance that might be readily classified or rated in an appraisal as ‘Average’. However, as Bevan and Huggett (2007, online) stress, “no one likes to be average”, and they warn this group of staff remains an:

untapped organisational resource – largely because organisations seldom notice them. It is up to organisations to break the
performance management habit of a lifetime and look beyond the chosen few to the majority………Liberating the performance of the humble, self-effacing HOD could be the greatest single step to higher performance that an organisation could make.  

(Bevan and Huggett, 2007, online)

Although the underlying principles for managing performance are the same, the formality and consequences of dealing with different types of performance can be very different:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MAXIMISING PERFORMANCE</th>
<th>POOR PERFORMANCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Usually a collaborative process between managers and staff</td>
<td>Involves more confrontation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can be informal, with written records only recording revised targets or actions</td>
<td>Is a formal process with each step being written down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is a cyclical process, one of constant improvement</td>
<td>Is a process that escalates into disciplinary proceedings, possibly concluding with termination of employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often involves analysis of the process</td>
<td>Often involves analysis of one individual’s behaviours or attitude.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2.3: Performance Management (Team Technology, 2008, online)**

Instances of underperformance are more uncomfortable for managers to manage, because they usually involve a level of confrontation:

*Managers find it easy to manage top-performing employees but are not so adept when it comes to improving poorer performers. Some of the greatest opportunities for improved organisational performance lie in helping managers raise the bar for moderate and poorer performers but it appears from our study that few employers are doing a good job of this."

(Hathaway, 2008, online)
A study conducted by the Hay Group (2007) concluded that British business loses £220 billion per annum in lost productivity through underperforming middle managers. It found that over two thirds of employers do not rate their line managers as either confident or competent at dealing with issues of underperformance and 48% of senior managers complained that middle managers were failing to address issues of underperformance within their teams (Walker, 2007).

Managers in HE are accountable for the performance of the organisation, school or unit. Therefore, if there are issues of poor performance, managers have a responsibility to tackle them. However, there is often a reluctance to tackle issues of underperformance and some managers ignore the issues in the hope that it will disappear. The Audit Commission (2002, p.32) found that:

Most managers find this area one of the most difficult parts of their job, as it will involve difficult situations, conflicts, embarrassment, and negative feelings. Fear of these can become ‘blocks’ for many people and mean that they avoid giving honest, critical feedback to people whose performance they are not happy with because they are afraid of how the discussion will go.

Compounding this, are a number of other fears. A good working relationship might be destroyed as a result of raising issues about performance. Some members of staff may react badly to what they are being told and become upset and angry, possibly leading to escalating confrontations. Accusations of bullying or racial/sexual harassment can also be levied against the manager, particularly where the relationship is poor to begin with.
Despite the discourse of managerialism in HE, it has to be assumed that academic and support managers would wish to improve identified poor performance, based on a concern for the quality of the total student experience and the general well-being of staff members. Although performance management became a statutory requirement for Schools in England, in September 2000, it has not yet become a requirement in HE. None-the-less, lessons can be learned from the experiences in schools where a clear distinction is made between performance management procedures and the national capability procedures which can lead to teacher dismissal. Rhodes and Beneicke (2003, p. 125) assert that where management action is taken (dependent upon the strength of the evidence and the desire to act) there are a number of possible results, including:

improved teacher performance, protracted discord, re-assignment, resignation or dismissal. The emotional, psychological and financial investment made by those involved in addressing poor performance is high. It is incumbent upon managers to act sensitively and professionally in understanding the causes of alleged poor performance, and thus to offer intervention appropriate to securing the most positive and beneficial outcomes for all concerned.

(Rhodes and Beneicke, 2003, p. 125)

Although ‘action to tackle poor performance’ was one of the criteria detailed in the HEFCE (2002) report, the KPMG evaluation carried out in 2005, revealed that “there has been limited activity, or evidence of improvement in tackling poor performance” (KPMG, 2005, p.12). Other findings are detailed below:
What schemes are in place to tackle poor performance? How embedded is the will to tackle poor performance?

- Activities most prevalent relate to training for staff and to the development of policies and procedures to tackle poor performance.
- 42% of HEIs reported introducing policies and procedures to combat absenteeism, and 41% of institutions had put in place some form of support mechanisms to assist poor performers. These were generally reported as a counselling service.
- Reported focus on this priority area was low, with none of the activities in this area being reported by more than 42% of respondents.
- According to the HR Directors who responded to the questionnaire, there is some evidence of improvement in tackling poor performance. This is especially true in relation to institutions now being in a better place to improve the capability of people in their roles. This extends to training staff in handling poor performance.
- HR Directors are now more aware of the value in tackling poor performance and feel they are in a better position to do so because they increasingly have the infrastructure and procedures in place to support them.
- Challenges remain around raising awareness of the importance of managing poor performance, but this will need to occur alongside improvements across the sector in the use of annual performance reviews and other performance management tools.

Table 2.4: Evaluation of Rewarding and Developing Staff in HE Initiative, (KPMG, 2005, p.12)

Armstrong and Ward (2005) concur with some of these findings, highlighting that some managers were found to be managing performance well, whilst other felt less able to confront underperformers because of an inability to deliver constructive feedback. Armstrong and Ward (2005, p.14) found that “the ability to give accurate and fair feedback was the single most important driver of performance”.

Armstrong and Ward (2005, p. 15) contend that managers need to understand that “Performance management is not an addition to their day job, it is their day job” and hence they need to focus on achieving results through their teams rather than being task focused. They conclude that when it comes to performance management, organisations need to adopt systems and practices that suit their particular strategy and culture. They also recommend that managers who manage people effectively are rewarded and that there are consequences for those who do not.

HR professionals however, need to become more strategic in their thinking and make a more concerted-effort to evaluate the impact of HR systems and processes on the bottom line, i.e. are they actually making a difference? Organisations also need to deal with the root causes of difficult issues rather than relying on performance management as a panacea for everything.

The next section of this chapter will explore how performance can be embedded into the people processes which form part of the Employee Life Cycle (ELC) – Recruitment, Induction, Probation, Staff Appraisal, Career development and succession planning, and Rewards, with particular reference to how this is being achieved in the sector.
2.9 RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

HEFCE (2002, p.4), states that:

*The world class reputation of UK higher education depends on its ability to recruit and retain high quality staff. Higher Education needs people with the expertise and the commitment to sustain – and improve – the performance of institutions in an increasingly competitive environment. Good human resource management (HRM), both now and in the future will be the key to success.*

The main purpose of the recruitment exercise is to ensure that a suitable number of prospective candidates, of the right calibre, apply for vacant positions within the organisation. In contrast, the main purpose of the selection process is to reduce the number of applicants, using fair and equitable criteria and assessment procedures until the best person for the job can be identified. The CIPD (2007c, online) state that “*having the right person, in the right place, at the right time, is crucial to organisational performance. Recruitment is a critical activity, not just for the HR team but also for line managers who are increasingly involved in the selection process.*” Universities therefore need to ensure that their managers are both knowledgeable and skilled in this vital process so that they are able to secure the best candidates.

2.9.1 The Business Case for Diligence

“Ineffectiveness in recruitment and selection may lead to poor work performance, unacceptable conduct, internal conflict, low morale and job satisfaction and dysfunctional labour turnover” (Corbridge and Pilbeam 1998, p.74). In reality, selecting a person for a 25K post (who could spend the next 20 years with the organisation) is a half a million pound decision. If the person is
mediocre, the organisation may get mediocre performance for the next 20 years. Thomson (2002, p37) points out that:

…it is much more difficult for you as a manager to manage people who perhaps should not have been there in the first place. Not only is there an element of inefficiency and possible disruption built in from the start, but the cost of remedying the situation in terms of the ultimate sanction of sacking someone can be very expensive both in financial and emotional terms.

There are many reasons for substandard performance - the person may not be capable or motivated to do the job. Absenteeism is also a problem and the long-term cost of getting the recruitment and selection process wrong is high. In today’s litigious society, a flawed recruitment and selection process or subsequent unfair dismissal, can end up in an Employment Tribunal (ET) which can be expensive in terms of staff time, solicitors and barristers fees and unwanted press. Careful planning and objectivity throughout the recruitment and selection process is therefore paramount.

2.9.2 Equality Issues

Whilst the Equality and Human Right Commission (2008, online) provides guidance on avoiding discrimination, organisations can fall fowl of the law as in Marrington v University of Sunderland, ET [1994] DCLD 25 where “a female lecturer was refused promotion because it was believed she would not fit into the male-dominated culture of the university” In addition, well-known mantras such as ‘having a gut feeling’ or ‘smelling a good one’ are equally taboo, amounting to no more than “judgements based on quaint and inaccurate criteria” (West, 1983, p.67). However, if managers approach the process in a
systematic way, use valid and reliable criteria, collect and record sound and factual information, there is an increased likelihood of getting it right.

2.9.3 The Process

The CIPD illustrate the best practice process for the recruitment and selection of staff in Figure 2.15 below:

![Figure 2.15: The Recruitment and Selection Process (CIPD, 2008, online)](image)

2.9.4 Job Specification

Truitt (1985, p.16) asserts that “when asked, most executives begin by describing the type of individual they want rather than the job they want done....” The creation of a vacancy, whether through resignation or dismissal,
provides an ideal opportunity to review the purpose of the post. Is the job still necessary, or could the monies be re-directed to more effective use, elsewhere within the organisation? Could some of the tasks be achieved through alternative means, such as contracting out or utilising better technology? (Corbridge and Pilbeam 1998). Beardwell and Wright, (2004, p.205) suggest that organisations would be wise to invest more time in the initial job analysis process and also examine alternative options to recruitment and selection such as potential re-deployment of existing staff, restructuring departments or workloads, or kerbing expenditure on recruitment and staffing budgets by delaying or stalling the process.

HEIs also need to build into their plans and HR strategies, their future staffing requirements and actions as to how these will be met. Lord Leitch’s review of skills published in December 2006, sets out targets for doubling attainment at most skills level by 2020 (Leitch, 2006). Building on this agenda, LLUK research to date (as part of the Sector Skills Agreement process) has identified the following skills issues for the Higher Education (HE) workforce across the UK.

- *Skills requirements in meeting the needs of a diverse range of learners*
- *Skills requirements in relation to management and leadership skills*
- *Skills gaps for support and technical staff at Level 4*
- *Current and future shortages in skilled academic staff.*

(LLUK, 2007)

However, Searle (2003) warns that the recruitment of new staff with new skills and attributes does not always facilitate the required organisational change because “organisations can become myopic in their attention to change once...
they have identified these new recruits, forgetting that their new recruits have to work with their existing staff. Thus recruitment and selection should be regarded as just one tool within a coherent HR strategy” (Searle, 2003, pp 5-6).

2.9.5 Job Descriptions

Job descriptions (JDs) and person specifications (PSs) are the most commonly used tools that form the basis of a recruitment and selection process. Harrison (1993, p.228) purports that although JDs are:

standard HRM tools...they are frequently inadequate for the tasks they need to perform within organizations.....they are often too brief and superficial to produce person specifications which aid effective differentiation between candidates for selection.

In addition, they are unable to adapt to changes within the organisation or the role unless they are reviewed on a regular basis and used as “a human resource management change tool” Harrison (1993, p.228) rather than being regarded as a one-off bureaucratic exercise.

2.9.6 Person Specification

The PS (devised using the job description as a framework) should aim to make explicit “the ideal person to perform the job to the required level” (Harrison, 1993 p.228).

Authors, such as Cole (2002) and Bratton and Gold (2007), make reference to the common use of Munro-Frazer’s five-fold grading system (1954) and Rodger’s seven-point plan (1952) as frameworks for determining PSs. However, Beardwell and Wright (2004, p.205) point out that these frameworks
are not only dated, but also call into question their potentially-discriminatory nature when seeking to establish criteria, such as health, appearance, bearing and speech. Rather, Thomson (2002, pp.42 - 43), suggests the use of four main headings – *Skills, Knowledge, Experience and Attitudes* advising that each of these should be divided into the ‘essential’ and then ‘desirable’ qualities required in the ideal person. ACAS (2007a) recommend the use of the five categories – Qualifications, Attainments, Experience, Special Aptitudes and Physical Abilities and Circumstances, but stress that the physical abilities and circumstances criteria should only be specified if they are a genuine requirement for the role, similarly, they also recommend the use of ‘essential’ and ‘desirable’ criteria for each category. The desirable qualities are a useful way of determining “assets which would enhance the effective performance of the job” (Thomson, 2002, p.42) and are often a useful way of discriminating fairly between candidates, especially if there are large numbers of applicants.

The importance of HR planning as part of an overall HR strategy, linked to an organisation’s corporate strategic plan, cannot be overstated. Designing job descriptions and person specification in isolation of these plans, will have obvious consequences.

**2.9.7 Job Evaluation**

Once the JD and the PS have been agreed, there is a need to establish other details in relation to the post, such as salary, terms and conditions. These should be competitive enough to attract high performers, but equitable with other posts in the organisation so as to eliminate claims under the The Equal
Pay Act 1970, “which makes it unlawful for employers to discriminate between men and women in terms of their pay and conditions where they are doing the same or similar work; work rated as equivalent; or work of equal value” (Government Equalities Office, 2008, online). The most objective and reliable way of establishing whether posts in the organisation take account of equal value criteria is to implement an analytical job evaluation scheme, such as The Higher Education Role Analysis (HERA) scheme (see section 2.14 on Pay and Reward).

2.9.8 Recruitment Methods

The method of recruitment will mostly be determined by factors, such as the type and level of job, the time-scale and the budget.

2.9.8.1 Advertisement

It is important to get the design of the advertisement right. It should only attract people of the right calibre and people in sufficient numbers. According to Beardwell and Wright (2004) consideration will need to be given to the audience, the image of the advertisement and the information provided.

Different methods of advertising can be deployed to suit the type and level of the vacancy, for example local newspapers, professional journals, internal or sector-wide websites such as Jobs.ac.uk. and social networking sites such as Facebook and MySpace (with a combined potential customer base of about 170 million consumers) are fast becoming the new recruitment tools for businesses looking to target particular groups of talent (Sartain, 2008, online).
Whichever advertising method is selected, potential candidates should be excited or motivated enough to request further information and an application form. Searle (2003, p.5) cautions that “an applicant chooses the firm just as much as the firm chooses the applicant….organisations spend in excess of £1 billion on recruitment advertising”.

2.9.8.2 Recruitment Packs

The paperwork that organisations send to prospective candidates needs to engage and motivate them enough to invest their time completing and returning the application form. High withdrawal rates from the process at this stage may indicate that something is wrong with the recruitment package on offer. Some organisations develop recruitment packs which alongside the JD, PS and application form, aim to communicate the brand of the organisation and typically contain important information about the organisation, for example its vision, mission, values and the benefits of working there. The inclusion of additional information on learning and development opportunities, equal opportunity and health and safety policies, can signal to the prospective candidate that the organisation is a good employer. Gatewood and Field (1987, p.9) warn against the temptation to:

*communicate an unrealistic concept of the job and the organisation……once settled, some individuals find the differences between their expectations and the actual job are unpleasantly large. Such discrepancies can cause a lack of commitment to the organisation and rapid job turnover.*
2.9.9 The Selection Process

Following the closing date for applications, the attention of the recruitment process shifts to the next stage, the selection process, where candidates are assessed as to their suitability:

Many factors affect work performance. The purpose of the selection is to enhance the probability of making correct hiring decisions – extending offers to those who will perform well in the organization and not extending job offers to those who will not do as well

(Gatewood and Field, 1987, p.20)

2.9.9.1 Shortlisting

The shortlisting process should evidence and record how each applicant either meets or does not meet each of the essential and desired criteria set out in the PS. It is paramount that organisations keep such records so that managers can defend their assessments if challenged on the grounds of unlawful discrimination. In the interests of minimising the likelihood of such claims, the shortlisting process is often undertaken by at least two people and a score agreed. Unsuccessful candidates should be informed at this stage and shortlisted candidates should be formally invited to take part in further selection processes.

2.9.9.2 Selection Methods

Dependant upon the type and level of the job, a variety of selection processes can be deployed, of which the most commonly used, are identified in the CIPD (2007c) Recruitment, Retention and Turnover survey as follows:
Table 2.5: Methods Used to Select Candidates (CIPD, 2007, p.13)

The most popular selection methodologies are interviews, either based around the CV/application form (92%), structured interviews carried out by a panel (88%) or competency-based interviews (86%). These are closely followed by various types of skills and ability tests.
Whilst many organisations do not currently count the actual costs of recruitment and labour turnover, those that do, show significant costs per employee.

Table 2.6: Cost of Recruitment and Turnover per Employee, (CIPD, 2007c, p.14)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational group</th>
<th>Costs of recruitment (£)</th>
<th>Costs of labour turnover (£)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senior managers/directors</td>
<td>10,000 (240)</td>
<td>11,000 (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers/professionals</td>
<td>5,000 (289)</td>
<td>11,000 (19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative, secretarial and technical</td>
<td>2,500 (288)</td>
<td>5,000 (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services (customer, personal, protective and sales)</td>
<td>2,000 (198)</td>
<td>5,000 (19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manual/craft workers</td>
<td>900 (143)</td>
<td>1,174 (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All employees</td>
<td>4,333 (337)</td>
<td>7,750 (24)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Median costs shown (number of respondents shown in brackets)
* Advertising costs, agency or search fees
** Vacancy cover, redundancy costs, recruitment/selection, training and induction costs

Bratton and Gold (2007) suggest that employers need to be mindful of the benefits of establishing positive psychological contracts with their employees. The recruitment and selection processes operated by an organisation, play a critical part in orchestrating a productive two-way relationship, based on a mutual understanding of what can be expected from either party. Activities should also be conducted in such a manner that the public image of the organisation is maintained - applicants who feel they have been poorly or unfairly treated will quickly make this known to third parties bringing the reputation of the organisation into disrepute (Cole, 2002). This in turn, can deter future candidates from applying.
2.9.10 Recruitment and Retention Issues in the HE Sector

The UCEA Recruitment and Retention of Staff in Higher Education survey (Strebler et al., 2005) found (according to the responses of 145 institutions), that they had experienced recruitment difficulties in terms of attracting academic staff to teach in disciplines such as law, business and management, computing/IT, health, economics and accounting. A possible cause was identified as the demand for staff with similar skills in the private or wider public sector, thus placing HEIs in competition with other sectors as well as with each other. Problems of attracting staff from the secondary school sector to teach on Education programmes, especially with specialities such as Early Years or Educational Psychology were also highlighted.

Retention issues were not generally cited as being problematic, since a third of institutions reported no movement in some areas of teaching, and where there was movement, it was reported to be to another institution, thereby retaining staff in the sector. There is however, increasing competition in some of the professions, such as health, where HEIs are either actively seeking to retain students once they have qualified, or, to seduce practising professionals to return to teaching in HE. The recent pay reviews in the health sector may mean that this will become more problematic.

Approximately a third of respondents were also experiencing problems recruiting and retaining manual staff, particularly in catering and cleaning, whilst more senior professional appointments, such as academic registrars, estates
management, financial accountants, HR and business development positions were also classified as difficult to fill (Strebler et al., 2005).

The launch of the second phase of the Prime Minister's Initiative for International Education in 2006, aimed at encouraging university and college partnerships in the UK and overseas, as well as attracting a further 100,000 overseas students to study in the UK, has acted as a catalyst for a number of HEIs to develop a more international focus - leading to the development of bespoke International Student Recruitment Strategies. However, internationalisation has potential consequences for the effective recruitment and selection of staff and Searle (2003, p.10) states that “many organisations.... are searching for suitable employees from across the world and applying the same selection criteria with limited attention to the effectiveness of these processes in assessing applicants from different cultural backgrounds”.

2.9.11 Evaluation of Recruitment Practices in HE

In general, HEIs managed to meet their recruitment needs even in identified problem areas such finance, business, IT, economics, electronics, law, healthcare and teacher education (HEFCE, 2006), although KPMG (2005, p.100) “could find no evidence of monitoring of the ‘quality’ of staff recruited”. A more significant challenge, was identifying how to make a career in UK higher education more attractive to people, including those from other sectors. Solving this will be critical in ensuring that HE can attract the further 17,000 academic staff needed to teach the additional students if the Government target of 50 %
participation in HE is to be achieved. In addition, the issue of internationalisation will necessarily have an impact on future recruitment processes.

Strebler et al. (2005) highlight the problem of some institutions having a limited amount of centrally-held data which impedes the effective monitoring and evaluation of recruitment and retention activity. They recommend that institutions seek to address this. In addition, they advise that HEIs consider exploring beyond the turnover figures so that they are able to satisfy themselves that turnover is not a result of more underlying institutional issues stating that it is “difficult and costly to replace the best performers” (Strebler et al., 2005, p.31).

The next section of this review will focus on the induction and probation stages of the ELC in relation to performance.
2.10 INDUCTION

With the best will in the world, induction cannot be described as a glamorous, exciting facet of people management. In fact, it often degenerates into a hastily organised chore – a task that line managers can see as being merely a distraction from more important duties (Rankin, 2006, p.38)

This part of the literature review will investigate the process of induction and its effect on performance as part of the ELC.

2.10.1 The importance of Induction

The expression left to sink or swim is often used by employees when describing their induction into an organisation. Baptism of fire is another. However, inefficient and unorganised approaches to staff induction lead to “at least a week of dead time when employees join an organisation”, thereby costing UK businesses up to £2 billion per annum in lost employee productivity (Online Recruitment, 2006, online).

Although recognised as a complex task, the CIPD (2006) advocate that all organisations should take a more holistic view and have in place a well thought-out and planned induction programme. A planned induction makes an important contribution to the smooth transition of an applicant to that of an employee, ensures they are able to reach optimum levels of performance sooner rather than later and also marks the beginning of a planned retention strategy (Corbridge and Pilbeam, 1998).
In HE, the student dimension is of equal importance. Gale (2004) found that some students were not impressed with the traditional ‘induction week’ offered by some universities. Following course registration and a quick welcome talk – they were then left to their own devices until teaching started the following week “in the loose hope that the rest of the time would be taken up with settling into accommodation, meeting others, sorting loan cheques etc…” (Gale, 2004, p.3). The reality was different. Some students – particularly those who were away from home for the first time - were lonely, vulnerable and homesick, and with no-one to turn to, “a number simply went away never to be seen again” (Gale, 2004, p.3). The induction process is also thought to have a bearing on student progression and completion rates.

In a similar vein, new employees are at their most vulnerable during the first few days or weeks of their employment (Thomson, 2002). They are often bereft of basic information such as how the organisation operates, who they can ask for advice and they are often apprehensive about being able to perform successfully in their new role (Koontz and Weihrich, 1990). It is therefore paramount that new employees are supported through a systematic and planned process of induction. Some new employees may be more vulnerable than others, such as those with disabilities, returning to work from maternity or a career break, ethnic minority employees or school/college leavers, all of whom may need greater attention during the induction process (ACAS, 2007b).
A study of newly-appointed lecturers (in teacher and nurse education) found that they experienced high levels of stress and difficulties in making the transition into higher education:

*On top of the normal challenges of joining a new organisation and starting a new role they experienced a change from being experienced, respected, and often senior, expert practitioners to being novices in many aspects of their new role as lecturers in professional subject disciplines. These feelings were compounded by ‘in at the deep end’ issues of workload, time pressures, finding it difficult to prioritise and hard to say ‘no’*

(Boyd and Lawley, 2007, p.14)

Even where some were involved with teaching on large programmes where there was regular day-to-day contact with other people, the relationships were not developed enough to prevent feelings of isolation. Key knowledge gaps were also identified, for example, marking student work and other assessment processes (Boyd and Lawley, 2007).

Whilst it is recognised that most organisations have formal induction procedures in place, putting these into practice can often fall short of the stated intentions – not necessarily through a lack of concern, but because induction demands are often seen to conflict or compete with operational requirements (Corbridge and Pilbeam, 1998). Research indicates that the level of turnover among new staff is less in organisations where appropriate attention has been given to their effective induction (Attwood and Dimmock, 1996).

The long-term costs of not affording sufficient and appropriate induction programmes are evidenced in the CIPD Recruitment, Retention and Turnover survey (2007c).
Table 2.7: Leavers by Length of Service (CIPD, 2007c, p.34)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of leavers by length of service</th>
<th>2007 survey</th>
<th>2006 survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of leavers with 0–6 months’ service</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of leavers with 7–23 months’ service</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of leavers with 2–5 years’ service</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of leavers with over 5 years’ service</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: 255

The survey identifies that 19% of leavers do so within the first six months of service. Guest and Kinney (1983, p.15) refer to this as “induction crisis”, where expectations do not match the reality of the workplace and new employees consequently experience serious doubts about the merit or long-term value of their employment with the organisation. Where an employee experiences concern early on but decides (for whatever reason) not to sever the relationship, they enter into a period of “differential transit” (Guest and Kinney, 1983, p.15) during which time they and their manager often adjust their expectations of each other. Despite this modification, a further 28% of leavers do so between seven and 23 months. Guest and Kinney (1983) identify a further induction crisis which occurs between two and five years after which a period of “settled connection” (Guest and Kinney, 1983, p.15) occurs.

ACAS (2005) highlight the dangers of poor induction training:
What if I get it wrong?

- Unsatisfactory performance and low job satisfaction
- Absenteeism, high labour turnover and resignations or dismissals
- Tribunal cases if employees complain of unfair dismissal because of inadequate training
- High demands on managers
- Accidents leading to injuries and/or prosecution
- Mistakes which are costly to the company

Table 2.8: What if I Get it Wrong? (ACAS, 2005, online)

Attwood and Dimmock (1996, p. 53) assert that:

> New employees usually want to do a fair days work for a fair days pay. They want to be accepted by their colleagues and to feel generally comfortable in the organisation and in their job. Management want workers who will quickly become efficient and committed. The aim of the induction process is to meet the needs of both parties in a mutually acceptable way.

2.10.2 Approaches to Induction

Armstrong (1996, p. 483) identifies three main aims to an induction process:

- To smooth the preliminary stages when everything is likely to be strange and unfamiliar to the starter;
- To establish quickly a favourable attitude to the company in the mind of the new employee so that he or she is more likely to stay;
- To obtain effective output from the new employee in the shortest possible time.
Thomson (2002) describes three ways in which these aims might be achieved – firstly through an introduction to the organisation and the role, secondly through becoming accustomed to the culture and people and thirdly through undertaking any formal training and development that might be identified or required. Fowler (1983, p.11) however, contends that “the design of an effective induction process may well start with an analysis of leavers’ attitudes and problems”.

Attwood and Dimmock (1996) and Graham and Bennett (1998) suggest that individuals will be more concerned with their immediate working environment during the first few weeks and that attention should focus on introductions to the working group and job role before seeking to cover any detailed company information. Foot and Hook (2005) support this view, advising that consideration also needs to be given to the order in which information is imparted, for example, some health and safety information will need to be given immediately whereas details of sports facilities or pension schemes would best be discussed later on during the induction process.

In order to plan what, when and how information will be delivered, it can be useful to devise an induction checklist (see Table 2.9), (Rankin, 2006) which can be used as a working document throughout the induction period. CIPD (2008c, p.4) stress the importance of having such a list in terms of ensuring that there is a record of:

*induction training received, ideally countersigned by the individual…(which) can be a vital source of reference later in employment - for example to check an employee has been briefed on policies, or to produce evidence of training in the event of a health and safety inspection.*
In addition to the more informal workplace induction that the line manager has responsibility for facilitating, many organisations also provide a more formal company induction course for new staff. This is usually run on a regular basis throughout the year thereby facilitating the attendance of mixed groups of employees recruited over a period of time. The CIPD (2008c) support the use of such courses because they allow new recruits to meet other new recruits and ensure that important organisational information is imparted in a consistent and
positive way. The disadvantages of such courses is that they may contain information that is not relevant to all employees, can be perceived as being rather impersonal and may not be accessed by the employee until they have been with the organisation for several months. Goodpractice.net (2007, online) provide a timely reminder of what some of these programmes can be like:

*New recruits were often subjected to a one or two-day programme where they sat in an overcrowded room and listened to a barrage of endless presentations from representatives from each department. It was common place for the speaker to pull out last minute and send some poor, unsuspecting, ill-prepared junior member of the team in their place. Despite huge amounts of information being conveyed, it is difficult to imagine that the new starts actually retained anything of value.*

### 2.10.3 Who is Involved?

Although it is likely that HR or the Training Department will play a part in the delivery of a formal company induction, Guest and Kenny (1983, p. 56) point out that in their experience many new staff are “*left trying to find their own feet, spending time reading documentation or aimlessly wandering around trying to get information.*” They go on to stress that “*line managers and supervisors should not abdicate responsibility for the less formal process*”. Co-workers and other key employees will also have a role to play and Thomson (2002) and Foot and Hook (2005) advocate the allocation of a buddy or mentor on a longer-term basis to assist the new employee in navigating their way around the organisation.

The departmental induction should start with a welcome from the departmental manager (Armstrong, 1996). The importance of the manager’s role at this stage
cannot be underestimated - it is an ideal opportunity to make clear any responsibilities and to “reconcile expectations on both sides” (Thomson, 2002, p.68).

However, the IRS survey (Rankin, 2006) found that many organisations do not brief their line managers adequately in relation to the importance of them investing quality time in the induction process; neither do they invest in training their line managers in the skills and techniques required to carry out an effective induction.

2.10.4 When Should it Take Place?

Even as early as the interview process, prospective employees are formulating favourable or unfavorable impressions of the organisation based on the way they are being treated and the information they receive (Foot and Hook, 2005).

Rankin (2006) advises that induction processes should be phased over a number of days, weeks or even months as most people are only able to absorb small amounts of information at a time. Obviously there are certain things that an individual will need to know straight away and therefore the induction topics will need to be prioritised into some sort of order. Attwood and Dimmock (1996) purport the value of ensuring two things on the first day – firstly that the new employee is given crucial health and safety information in order that they do not imperil themselves or others and secondly that all steps are taken to ensure that they do not feel foolish or misplaced. They will therefore need to have a basic
orientation to ensure they know the layout of the working environment including the location of basic facilities such as rest areas and toilets as well as meeting immediate colleagues.

2.10.5 Methods of Delivery

Where induction is delivered in an innovative and effective way, the levels of knowledge and motivation in new employees will increase. Rankin (2006) identifies that the three most popular methods used during the induction process are tours to meet colleagues and other people (89%), one to one, face to face meetings (81%) and group sessions and information packs (75%):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methods used in induction programmes</th>
<th>ALL EMPLOYERS, %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Face to face in group sessions</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face to face, one to one</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tours to meet work colleagues, managers, etc</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits to other departments</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentations/talks by senior managers</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRACTICAL LEARNING</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projects to be completed by the inductee</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions to be answered by the inductee</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work simulations</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role plays</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information materials/packs</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FLEXIBLE LEARNING</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible learning packages</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Via employer’s intranet</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.10: Methods Used in Induction Processes (Rankin, 2006, p.42)

2.10.6 Evaluation of its Effectiveness

“Induction is a perishable commodity; its coverage becomes out of date very quickly as the organisation, its marketplace and the laws covering it evolve and
It should therefore be reviewed and renewed on a regular basis to ensure that the content and format of both the informal and formal induction programme is up to date. It should also be evaluated on a regular basis to ensure that it meets the needs of the individuals being inducted as well as those of the department and organisation.

Rankin (2006, p. 45) also shows that whilst most organisations do evaluate their induction programmes (77%), the evaluation tends to be superficial with the most popular method found to be “asking employees immediately after induction” (68%). Less than 50% of organisations used methods such as feedback from the line managers, employee attitude surveys, information from performance reviews or retention/dismissal rates.

The CIPD (2007c) recruitment, retention and turnover survey reveals that exit interviews are the most popular method of investigating why employees leave. Despite being used by 90% of respondents, the CIPD warn of the unreliability of such interviews especially if conducted by the same person that the employee will need an employment reference from. They therefore recommend the use of staff attitude surveys and confidential exit surveys, but contend that it is better in the first place to ensure that new starters have pragmatic expectations of their role and that they are given an appropriate induction. To this end, Induction is sometimes regarded by organisations as a mandatory element of staff training for new employees and the successful completion of the induction programme can form part of the organisation’s probation arrangements.
2.11 PROBATION

The word probation can, for some, conjure up visions of employees on temporary release from a suspended prison sentence, however, used in its purest form it is “a testing of conduct or character of person, especially of candidate……for employment” (The Concise Oxford Dictionary, 1982, p.819).

At the commencement of employment, most people are given what is commonly referred to as a probationary period to work. Contracts of employment are usually tendered to an individual subject to meeting a number of requirements such as:

- Satisfactory employment references;
- Medical clearance;
- Authenticiation of qualifications;
- A Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check (where appropriate);
- Satisfactory completion of a probationary period.

As part of the employment contract, employees have a responsibility to achieve acceptable levels of performance and employers should look to encourage and assist them in reaching the required standards. ACAS (2008, online), state that “when an employee starts, the standards of work required, the conditions of any probationary period, and the consequences of failure to meet the necessary standards should be explained”.

Technically, this is a period of time when new employees would wish to impress. Any shortfalls in performance are hence warning lights which should be heeded and appropriate remedial action taken. Equally, the organisation should also wish to impress and the probationary period gives the employee the opportunity to sample the organisation.
During the probationary period – which can vary in length according to the role – employees should be supervised by a person who is experienced and also competent in the area of work concerned. Reviews of performance should be carried out at regular intervals and records should be kept of progress during the probationary period. As soon as the probationary period has been satisfactorily completed, the employee should be formally confirmed into post.

If the recruitment and selection process has been thorough and expectations set out clearly as part of the induction process, then issues of poor performance during a probationary period should be rare. Any identified shortfalls in performance can be addressed and rectified through a variety of interventions such as training and development, mentoring and coaching and closer supervision.

Dismissal during the probationary period is regarded by the CIPD (2007d, online) as a “serious matter that needs careful handling”. An employer must therefore not only have a good reason for dismissing an individual, but must also act reasonably if it is to be regarded as fair. Employees with less than one year’s service cannot claim unfair dismissal unless there are grounds of discrimination relating to gender, race, disability etc. or harassment. After one year’s service, the CIPD (2007d, online) state that “employees have the right not to be unfairly dismissed. All that the employee needs to prove is that they have been dismissed: the employer must then prove the dismissal was fair”.

The literature appears relatively silent on employment matters relating to probation and indeed the much of the HR literature pertaining to the HE sector, for example the document entitled ‘Rewarding and developing staff in higher education. Good practice in setting HR strategies’ (HEFCE, 2002), makes no mention of probation. However, a desk-top review reveals that most HEIs do have in place various arrangements for probation. Probationary periods for support staff indicate that a three to six-month period is the norm for the sector but for academic staff there are more variations ranging from no formal probation period for research staff (University of Dundee), one to two years (Worcester University), three years (Durham University) and four years (The Open University). Additionally, there are different processes in operation, for example the University of Kent considers ‘confirmation to posts’ on an annual basis and the University of Worcester have specified conditions that need to be met by different staff groups.

University College, London expect that Probationary Lecturers and Research Fellows will normally register for the Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education' (CLTHE) offered by the UCL Centre for the Advancement of Learning and Teaching, unless they have more than three years' teaching experience or have successfully completed an equivalent course elsewhere. The Head of Department may consider whether there is a case for exemption from the Certificate programme. The University of Durham assesses academic staff (during their probation) against ten headline criteria: Research Activity, Teaching, Range and Quality, Teaching Competence, Curriculum Development,
Feedback on Teaching, Academic leadership, Administration, Other external income generation, Strategic fit and special factors (see Appendix 9).

2.12 STAFF APPRAISAL


> Appraisal is a compulsively fascinating subject, full of paradoxes and love-hate relationships. And appraisal schemes are really controversial...Some schemes are popular, with overtones of evangelical fervour, while others are at least equally detested and derided as the ‘annual rain dance’, ‘the end of term report’, etc.

Over the years, advocates and critics have debated the positives and negatives of performance appraisal. Gray (2002, p.16) believes that performance appraisals do not work because amongst other things “most of us are unqualified to understand, let alone tamper with the complexities of employee performance”. However, a recent survey (CIPD, 2005) found that individual appraisals are in fact carried out by 65% of organisations on an annual basis, 27% on a twice-yearly basis, whilst the remaining used rolling appraisals.

2.12.1 What is Performance Appraisal?

Fombrun et al. (1984) makes explicit use of the word Performance when illustrating the Human Resource Cycle - sometimes referred to as the ELC. This model highlights the importance of performance appraisal as a means of determining rewards and/or the need for further development.
Performance appraisal is “a well-established way of providing milestones, feedback, guidance and monitoring for staff. A further development….is tying this appraisal into a larger and more complex system of performance management” (Weightman, 1999, p.200). CIPD (2008d) support the view that whilst performance appraisal is an important part of performance management, it is only one tool amongst a range of tools that can be used to manage performance. They also highlight the fact that because performance appraisals are most usually carried out by the line managers, rather than HR professionals, it is important that they understand their role in the process and have the right skills to conduct them effectively.

Milkovich and Wigdor (1991) purport that whilst performance appraisal aims to accurately assess the effectiveness of an individual’s job performance, as well
as improve organisational performance systems, it is impossible to standardise the context within which the appraisal takes place, or indeed the people who are either appraising or being appraised, further compounding the reasons behind the derision that performance appraisal often receives.

Although the CIPD (2005) purport that there is no one right way to conduct an appraisal, they do advise that there are five key elements to a performance appraisal, underpinned by effective dialogue:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEASUREMENT</th>
<th>Assessing performance against agreed targets and objectives.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FEEDBACK</td>
<td>Providing information to the individual on their performance and progress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT</td>
<td>Emphasising what has been done well and making only constructive criticism about what might be improved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXCHANGE OF VIEWS</td>
<td>A frank exchange of views about what has happened, how appraisees can improve their performance, the support they need from their managers to achieve this and their aspirations for their future career.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGREEMENT</td>
<td>Jointly coming to an understanding by all parties about what needs to be done to improve performance generally and overcome any issues raised in the course of the discussion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2.11: The Five Key Elements of a Performance Appraisal (CIPD, 2008a, online)**

Wolff (2008, p.6) asserts that “the key to solving underperformance is communication, communication, communication – coupled with clarity about expectations and objectives, early intervention and ensuring that managers have a clear view of the underlying problem before applying a solution”.
Suff (2006) reports that managers use a variety of processes to communicate their expectations to employees, with the majority (88.7%) using the performance appraisal/review process:

![Figure 2.17: How are Individual Performance Expectations Communicated to Employees? (Suff, 2006, p.4)](image)

Figure 2.17: How are Individual Performance Expectations Communicated to Employees? (Suff, 2006, p.4)

A critical part of any performance management system is the assessment of performance and whilst Corbridge and Pilbeam (1998) contend that some kind of system is required to facilitate that process, whether that be a top-down scheme, self-appraisal, peer appraisal, upward appraisal or 360-degree feedback, Nickols (2000a, p.7) argues that:

> performance-related discussions between bosses and subordinates do not require a formal, full blown performance appraisal system. Indeed it can be argued that the real coaching and counselling sessions that shape and improve employee performance occur informally, outside such systems. The same can be said of goal setting and feedback.
The CIPD (2005) Performance Management survey indicates that organisations in fact deploy a range of activities which they utilise as part of their performance management arrangements:

Table 2.12: Features of Performance Management (CIPD, 2005, p.3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features of performance management</th>
<th>Organisations (%) using this feature</th>
<th>Organisations (%) using this feature and believing it to be effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual annual appraisal</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twice-yearly/bi-annual appraisal</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rolling appraisal</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>360-degree appraisal</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer appraisal</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-appraisal</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team appraisal</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subordinate feedback</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous assessment</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence assessment</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectives-setting and review</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance-related pay</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence-related pay</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution-related pay</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team pay</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching and/or mentoring</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career management and/or succession planning</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal development plans</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Following a study of 41 scholarly and professional articles, Glendinning (2002, p. 164) summarizes some of the key benefits of an effectively-implemented performance management system (Table 2.13). However, in order to fully realise these benefits, Mullins (1999, p.699) stresses the importance of getting the top management to own the system and be fully committed to the process, so that the scheme is not regarded by staff as the prerogative of the HR department.
Improved employee work performance

Employees with potential for advancement are identified;

Planning for future HR needs is augmented;

Business objectives are realised;

Improved morale and Improved customer satisfaction;

A clear linkage between pay and performance is achieved;

A competitive advantage is obtained;

Improved quality of supervision.

Table 2.13: Key Benefits of an Effectively-implemented Performance Management System (Glendinning, 2002, p.164)

2.12.2 Performance Appraisal in Higher Education

Appraisal schemes were first introduced en-masse into universities following the recommendations of the Jarrett Report (1985). However, due to a widely-held belief that schemes would be judgemental rather than developmental, there emerged a reluctance to operationalise or support any such schemes, despite additional sums of money being made available. The Education Reform Act 1988 saw the establishment of 80-plus post-1992 universities and a contractual requirement to participate in an appraisal scheme approved by the Board of Governors (ACAS, 1990).
However, the extent to which appraisal schemes became embedded in HEIs was variable and (Beesley et al., 2004) identified a number of issues with them:

- The paperwork was often considered to be bureaucratic and confidentially clauses meant that in practice little or nothing was shared.
- There was a distinct avoidance of any scoring or assessment of performance, with the emphasis being on development.
- There was no link between the appraisal schemes and the institutions strategies, plans or planning processes and although annual appraisals were recommended, some institutions (and particularly for academic staff) conducted their appraisal on a biennial basis.

Determined to see robust and appropriate appraisal arrangements in place, a number of external influences emerged towards the end of the decade:

1. The Dearing Report (1997) and the Bett Report (1999) both recommended that HEIs make clearer links between staff development and institutional needs and made explicit for the first time the desire to introduce performance management systems;

2. Included among the principles of the new pay and grading framework for HE was the statement re-iterating the importance of “regular development reviews for all staff – with a view to facilitating both the improvement of performance to meet institutional objectives and career development for individuals” (JNCHES, 2003, p.3).
3. HEFCE (and subsequently HEFCW) – as part of the *Rewarding and Developing Staff in HE initiative*, required HEIs to produce HR Strategies which took particular cognizance of recruitment and retention, staff development and training, equal opportunities, equal pay and job evaluation, review of staffing needs, annual performance reviews and action to tackle poor performance. HEFCE invested funds of £330m over three years to assist HEIs in modernising their HR practices and processes – an investment that was linked to an expectation that real improvements would be made (Huxley and Thackwray, 2004).

4. The Investors in People standard - which many HEIs were being encouraged to achieve - required that institutions demonstrate how they meet the indicator: “An Investor in People develops effective strategies to improve the performance of the organisation through its people;” (IiP, UK, 2008b, online).

These interventions influenced the thinking on staff appraisal in the sector, causing institutions to review their existing schemes which they described as “out of date”, “onerous and ineffective” with “patchy implementation”, “neglect in some areas” and “low participation rates” (Beesley et al., 2004, p.11). It is interesting to note that the authors of the survey also state that:

*there may have been some significant changes in the HE sector since appraisal was first introduced in the late 80s but there is a distinct sense of déjà vu when reading some of the challenges identified in the survey*

(Beesley et al., 2004, p.12)
The survey further highlighted the difficulties identified by some institutions in relation to getting their managers to manage, reporting that:

*This resistance tends to be greater amongst academic staff with one institution stating that this group, with AUT support, had opted out of a performance management approach and another admitting that terminology such as ‘performance’ and ‘targets’ had been deliberately avoided. The challenges are exacerbated when the issues affecting academic staff and the managerial role are combined, e.g. the nature of rotating headship of academic departments, an unwillingness to adopt managerial structures and a culture of peer review do not fit easily with a scheme that is manager-led and focuses on performance management.*

(Beesley et al., 2004, p.12)

Nevertheless there was a will amongst institutions to modify their schemes and the changes that they reported they were making, or intended to make are highlighted in Appendix 10. The KPMG (2005, pp 6-7) revealed that aside from new performance management systems, procedures and training, there was also a need for a more common understanding of the concept of performance management across the sector as well as:

*a cultural shift within HEIs towards an acceptance of performance management…..so that performance review becomes the norm, rather than the exception. This will involve tackling poor performance, but also managing good performance.*

In particular, KPMG found a number of issues concerning appraisals:
What proportion of staff within HEIs have their performance reviewed annually? Has this figure increased since 2001? To what extent is reward now linked to contribution?

HEIs reported low levels of staff receiving appraisal. There have been different interpretations by HEIs of the meaning of performance review and appraisal. Mixed views were reported on the importance of annual performance reviews. There has been a focus on spending on infrastructure for performance management. There appears to be variable implementation of annual performance reviews. There has been some innovation in making performance review widespread for all staff in HEIs. Important cultural challenges remain in many HEIs in implementing annual performance reviews. Rewards related to contribution or merit payments have been introduced in over half of HEIs, with a focus so far on schemes directed at more senior staff.

Table 2.14: Annual Staff Reviews (KPMG, 2005, p.11)

Huxley and Thackwray (2004, p.4) concur with these findings adding that many HE staff view appraisal with “suspicion and skepticism” because it is often “unrelated to ‘real’ interests and activities”. They contend that whilst there are examples of good practice around, the research has also highlighted the lack of connection between HE appraisal schemes and organisational or departmental objectives. They warn however, of the danger of re-inventing or re-branding schemes when in fact, “the scheme is fine, but the approach to integration and achieving ‘buy-in’ is losing the battle” (Huxley and Thackwray, 2004, p.4). A survey of 192 institutions by UCEA found that 81% of institutions were either implementing, or considering implementing new systems of performance management however there was still resentment from many academic staff who
contend that their work cannot be quantified as easily as in the private sector. The Chief Executive of the LFHE, Wooldridge (2007) said “Universities are different from Univer. They are not product focused, and it has to be recognised that the culture is that of a pluralistic community........ maybe someone should invent a new phrase to describe it so that it doesn’t provoke this sort of Pavlovian reaction” (Tahir, 2007, p. 5).

Fearn (2008) reports on HR progress made since the HEFCE investment of £330 million over three years. She cites the CIPD, who are of the view that HE presents a particular challenge to HR not simply because of its diverse range of staff, but also because it has some outdated systems, some very bad practice and an unwillingness from some academics to accept management roles and responsibilities. As Archer (2005) identified in his report, academics in managerial positions tend not to focus on the people-management aspect of their jobs and he is of the opinion, that three years on, that it still the case.

Beesley et al. (2004) purport that there are some 21 key messages (see Appendix 10), that are worth repeating when it comes to designing and implementing a scheme that is fit for purpose in the sector including the importance of making sure all staff are trained to operate the scheme effectively and have the right levels of interpersonal skills.

Huxley and Thackwray (2004, p.10) report the emergence of three themes which appear to be underpinning the greater involvement of HR people in strategic management and an integration of disjointed people processes:
1. The HEFCE Rewarding and Developing Staff initiative

2. Use of the Investors in People framework

3. Legislation (particularly relating to diversity)

### 2.13 CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND SUCCESSION PLANNING

Succession planning is essential and universities on the whole are not very good at it, I guess for two reasons. One because we are not very good at talent spotting, but we have had to get better at it not least because in the much more competitive world we live in, if you do not spot your talent, someone else will spot it and seduce it away. So one of the things that we, like many other institutions, are trying to do is to find some effective mechanism for succession planning.

(LFHE, 2004, p.8)

This part of the literature review will investigate the process of career development and succession planning and its effect on performance as part of the ELC.

#### 2.13.1 What is Succession Planning?

The CIPD describe succession planning as:

A process by which one or more successors are identified for key posts (or groups of similar key posts), and career moves and/or development activities are planned for these successors. Successors may be fairly ready to do the job (short-term successors) or seen as having longer-term potential (long-term successors)

(CIPD, 2008e, online)

Cohen (2001, p.264) contends that careers today are “in a state of flux”, caused by flatter structures, the increased use of part-time and fixed-term contracts and the need for greater flexibility. Whilst the use of flexible work patterns is “increasingly being adopted by organisations to enhance their effectiveness
through more efficient utilisation of resources in response to an increasingly turbulent and competitive environment” (Brewster et al., 2003, p. 119), succession planning within this context is invariably complex.

2.13.2 The importance of career development and succession planning

A number of challenges have been identified by the HE funding councils which are likely to have a significant impact on the future staffing needs in the sector (see Table 2.15). These challenges will need to be analysed by individual HEIs in order that impact at a local level can be established. However, despite these projected changes, the KPMG (2005) evaluation of HEIs found that the least developed area of HRM was workforce planning. In addition, there is an aging population in many universities a significant proportion of whom may retire around the same time leaving large gaps (HEFCE, 2006).
The numbers of academic staff recruited to HEIs could rise by as much as 25% between 2004 and 2011 (this would represent an increase from the 6,000 recruited in 2004-05 to a possible 8,800 needed in 2010-11). These are sector level projections, and the volatility at local level is often greater.

If there is no change in staffing levels and the historic leaving rate is maintained, the need for academic recruits could, conversely, fall very slightly.

The subject areas which may require the largest growth in academic staff would be social policy, engineering, biological sciences and medicine. Difficulties in recruitment to the science subjects will additionally impact on medical research. The science base for medicine and community health, and student recruitment, would both be compromised if insufficient scientifically trained graduates return to the secondary education sector to teach the students and academics of the future.

This could raise particular challenges in certain specialist areas – for example, in HR and estates management – where the pay and opportunities can often be better elsewhere.

There may be an overall lack of flexibility in UK higher education, which can make HEIs slow to respond to strategic change, although many HEIs are becoming increasingly responsive.

Table 2.15: Challenges for Future Staffing Needs (HEFCE, 2006, p.33)

2.13.3 How can organisations address the challenges?

Corbridge and Pilbeam (1998, p.5) assert that there is no “one best way” to undertake employment resourcing because it is “characterised by uncertainty and diversity”. They advocate that organisations adopt an integrated and holistic approach to employment resourcing which ensures that all aspects are considered (see Figure 2.18):
### The context of employment resourcing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisational stakeholders</th>
<th>Conflict resolution</th>
<th>Termination of employment</th>
<th>Redundancy</th>
<th>Organisational development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment relations</td>
<td>Human Resource Planning</td>
<td>Recruitment and selection</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitive employment issues</td>
<td>Patterns of work and flexibility</td>
<td>Equality of opportunity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and safety</td>
<td>Human resource development</td>
<td>Managing performance</td>
<td>Pay and reward</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Strategic direction of the organisation

- Computerised personnel information systems

**Figure 2.18: An Integrated Approach to Employment Resourcing**
*(Colbridge and Pilbeam 1998, p.3)*

In essence, employment resourcing or Human Resource Planning (HRP) is a balancing act concerned with forecasting demand and planning to ensure the requisite supply. Whilst there is a need to embrace new ideas and approaches through the attraction of new staff into the organisation, there is also a need to invest in the development of existing staff and be flexible enough to make adjustments in changing circumstances. Beardwell (2004, p. 160) makes
reference to the usefulness of having a model for setting out a framework for HRP. This is replicated in Figure 2.19 below:

Figure 2.19: The Process of Human Resource Planning (Beardwell, 2004, p. 160)
Investigation and analysis is an important starting point in determining an overall picture of the organisation in relation to the internal and external labour market and corporate capability and strategy. Analytical tools, such as PESTLE and SWOT, can assist with environmental scanning (Corbridge and Pilbeam 1998, p.6).

Understanding the makeup of the internal labour market is necessary in order to identify where there may be potential problem areas or gaps and to evaluate the effective use of skills and knowledge within the organisation. Organisations also need to keep an eye on the external labour market (whether that be international, national or local), collecting and analysing data concerning the availability, type, quality and cost of appropriate labour in order to inform future HR planning activity.

The LFHE (2009, online) stress the importance of HEIs viewing succession planning as a means of creating a “pipeline” of talent rather than a tap to be turned on and off suggesting that HEIs should have “at least two ready now” (LFHE, 2009, online) candidates for every critical role (both academic and support). Because the demand for leadership and management talent outstrips the supply, HEIs are advised to adopt a “grow your own” (LFHE, 2009, online) strategy which is not only more cost-effective than seeking talent externally (although it can be very insular), but can also have the added advantage of motivating existing staff. Robust information needs to be available so that informed decisions can be made, and pertinent questions need to be regularly asked such as:
• What capabilities do we need to deliver the strategy?
• If our present leaders/managers were applying for their current positions today, what percentage would be successful?
• What pools of talent do we need to develop to ensure sustainable leadership?

CIPD (2008e) highlight the usefulness of deploying databases which can identify existing skills and gaps in relation to roles, potential successors and development activity.

2.13.4 Who is Responsible?

CIPD (2008e) suggest that responsibility for HRP is a shared activity between:

• **Top Managers** – who understand the future direction of the organisation and how any predicted changes might impact upon the numbers and skills of staff/managers in the future. The LFHE (2009, online) advocate that the Vice-Chancellor and senior management team need to “roll up their sleeves” and pro-actively seek to identify either individuals or groups of staff who can be added to a “talent pool” so that they can be developed over a period of time in readiness to apply for the more senior positions when they become vacant.

• **Human Resources** – as a facilitator of HRP processes such as assessment, information support, careers advice, presenting proposals and options, and as a means of ensuring that there is an alignment between organisational strategy and required capabilities (both current and future).
• *Line Managers* – who need to own and manage the HRP process, identify gaps and proactively ensure a future supply of potential leaders. This of course assumes that appropriate training and development is in place to ensure that line managers have the knowledge and experience to do this.

### 2.13.5 Equality Issues

Whilst equality issues should be at the forefront of all HR concerns, succession planning is perhaps one of the areas that can evoke the most dissatisfaction if the process is not open, fair and widely understood. Objective criteria should form the basis of all assessments and ‘succession development committees’ can play an important role in reviewing talent and succession plans, including the types of roles that would be considered suitable. Individuals should have the opportunity to discuss their potential career aspirations and “as a growing number of organisations recognise the business case for diversity, they are increasingly aware of the need to ensure that the talents of women and ethnic minorities are properly developed” (CIPD, 2008e, online).

### 2.13.6 The Role of Staff Development in Succession Planning

*a major part of staff development in institutions of higher education has traditionally been to do with developing academic staff in their role as teachers. More specifically, staff development has often been equated with developing pedagogical skills in the subject discipline…… it is now widely recognised that academic staff need to develop a broader range of skills and competencies including management and interpersonal skills and that academic staff are only one segment of a complex and diverse academic community******.

(Brew, 1995, p.17)
Since the introduction of HR strategies into the sector, coupled with the significant funding arrangements from HEFCE to support the implementation of key HR activities, KPMG (2005, p. 5) found that a substantial amount of investment had been made in “staff development and training courses, particularly in management and leadership development” and although it was considered to have had the greatest impact, it had also “raised expectations amongst HE staff that the investment in this area will continue” (KPMG, 2005, p.5).

Mayo (2007) advises that organisations need to be more pro-active in developing various career paths rather than continuing to think of promotion in hierarchical terms. He suggests that there are a number of other ways to develop potential leader/manager successors, alongside the more traditionally recognised training courses or qualification based development. These include “adding another hat” (Mayo, 2007, online) to the role by giving opportunities to take on more horizontal responsibility, for example, through involvement in cross-functional projects or through encouraging them to take responsibility for the learning of others, perhaps through being a mentor, presenting at conference or getting involved in development and assessment centres.

In a response to the limited number of people wishing to enter into a leadership role or leadership career in HE, LFHE have created a Leadership Development Centre (LDC) to assist institutions in firstly identifying staff with future leadership potential, and secondly, putting in place a supporting career development plan which helps to ‘springboard’ their activity and development over an agreed
period. This process is designed to provide a framework for succession management in HEIs through increasing the number of potential leadership recruits. The programme can be tailored to accommodate either groups of institutions or groups of people within an individual HEI and follows a defined process:

![Succession Management Process Diagram](image)

**Figure 2.20: The Succession Management Process (LFHE, 2006, p. 9)**

The LFHE (2006) also run a number of other preparatory programmes which HEIs can utilise as part of their succession planning activity, for example, *The Head of Department Programme, Preparing for Senior Strategic Leadership, The Senior Strategic Leadership Programme* and *the Top Management Programme* - a personal and professional development programme for those who already command senior positions or those with potential to reach the top.

The IRS 2006 learning and development survey (Wolff, 2006) found that 55% of respondents have a formal leadership development strategy in place although the groups and levels of management that are covered by the strategy vary...
from organisation to organisation. Coaching and mentoring by external practitioners was reported to be the most effective training method for directors/executives and some groups of managers (39%), whilst instructor-led, classroom training such as modular development programmes, was considered the most effective method of delivery for managers and non-management staff (28%) with e-learning at the bottom of the scale with only one organisation rating it as effective for non-management staff.

The key challenges for learning and development were identified as: getting real commitment from senior managers, being able to consistently demonstrate added value, motivating employees to actively engage and finding the time to undertake the activity. Wolff (2006, p.8) asserts that:

> training and development practitioners can find themselves facing a ‘catch 22’ situation. On the one hand, they are expected to get value from learning and development (LD) activities and prove that benefits have been gained. But on the other hand, budgets and staffing can be inadequate, making it difficult to get the expected return

The next section of the literature review will examine pay and reward as a contributor to improved performance.

### 2.14 PAY AND REWARD

Today’s workers want more than a comprehensive compensation and benefits package. In fact, many studies indicate that non-monetary factors attract applicants to one employer over others. Key factors such as the chance to make an impact, appreciation for work well done, open communication between themselves and management, the opportunity to gain new skills and control over their current and future lives are of particular importance to applicants and employees alike

Arthur, 2001, p. 57)
The ultimate purpose of any organisation is to provide something that other people want or need and to create income and make profits in order to sustain the continued existence and (where appropriate) growth of the organisation. To do this, the organisation is reliant (amongst other things) on people to successfully deliver the business and in return for this, people expect to be rewarded (Barlas et al., 2002).

Cole (2002, p.248) describes the rationale behind pay policies/systems as:

- To attract sufficient and suitable employees
- To retain employees who are satisfactory
- To reward employees for effort, loyalty, experience and achievement.

In its purest sense, pay is a basic transaction involving specified sums of money given in return for specified goods or services. However, it can also be “one of the main influences on the degree to which people value their employment” (Torrington, Hall and Taylor 2002, p.562), since pay has the propensity to affect the economic viability and social standing of people’s lives. Typically, wages, salaries and related costs (pensions etc.) make up about 60% of the total running costs of a business. Employers would therefore be wise to take a healthy interest in this particular facet of their operations.
Cole (2002) identifies a number of factors that can influence pay rates and salary levels and although these are important, Lewis (2001) suggests that times have changed and that employers prefer instead, more strategic reward systems designed to drive business strategy. Organisations who seek to establish an integrated approach to HRM generally use the words ‘reward’ or ‘remuneration’ to describe a more holistic package of benefits as in:

*some sort of multiple helix, where motivation, skills, career and performance are all intertwined to produce added-value to the individual career and corporate aspects, with pay reflecting, describing and moving with the other elements continuously*

(Torrington, Hall and Taylor, 2002, p.563)
A talented and motivated workforce can be the secret to organisational success and strong financial performance. Reward strategies, although complicated, can play a significant part in motivating and incentivising staff to perform well, but currently, 67% of organisations do not have a formal reward strategy in place (CIPD, 2008f).

When designing reward strategies, organisations need to determine what employee behaviours they want to either encourage or change and take into consideration any ethical and equitable issues as part of the design. In themselves, equitable systems – whether they concern pay or otherwise – do not tend to cause overt elation amongst employees. Inequitable systems on the other hand can cause demonstrable havoc (Lewis, 2001). The Bett Report (1999, paragraph 147), also highlighted pay inequality in higher education and recommended that:

> Job evaluation - or some other job analysis and ranking system, which satisfactorily accommodates the full range of duties and responsibilities appropriate to higher education - will be essential for the sorts of reforms to pay structures outlined....It will be a necessary requirement, at least for ensuring equal pay for work of equal value

In 2004, the National Framework Agreement for the Modernisation of Higher Education Pay Structures (NFA) was developed in partnership between UCEA and Trade Unions (UCU - formerly NATFHE & AUT - and Unison) at national level under the Joint Negotiating Committee for Higher Education Staff (JNCHES). The NFA recognised the need to modernise pay arrangements in higher education in order to ensure equal pay for work of equal value under the Equal Pay Act 1970 (as amended 1984), to improve the recruitment and
retention of staff, tackle problems of low pay and underpin opportunities for career progression by recognising and rewarding the contribution that individual staff make.

Role analysis and job evaluation were accepted as key features of the NFA (UCU, 2008a) and the agreement included the requirement to undertake formal job evaluation across the whole university, as well as the introduction of a single 51 point pay spine and revised salary structures for all staff. The Educational Competencies Consortium Ltd (EEC) developed the Higher Education Role Analysis (HERA) tool specifically for this purpose and have highlighted the benefits of using competencies to help institutions develop people’s capabilities and performance in an objective and transparent way. The role analysis and job evaluation, (which takes place as part of the HERA exercise), provides the foundation upon which the links between recruitment, induction, development, reward and recognition can be made using the ECC toolkit as detailed in Figure 2.22.
In particular, the benefits of the toolkit in relation to Pay and Grading include:

- Pay and grading structures relate to institutional need
- Greater control over pay bill
- Satisfies equal pay for work of equal value requirements
- Allocation to grade on grounds that are open and equitable
- Differences between roles graded higher and lower are obvious
- Keep pay and grading structure in line with need
- Can develop and cost alternative models

(Pointon and Ryan, 2004, p.518) suggest that “reward systems form part of the employees’ notion of organisational justice and as such underlie a sense of loyalty”. They also stress that whilst an organisation’s base pay should be at
the heart of the reward strategy, variable and indirect rewards should also form part of the total compensation package.

An important bond is that of the psychological contract “which is seen to underpin all reward and performance management systems in that it conceptualises the wage/effort bargain for a new generation of workers and owners” (Pointon and Ryan, 2004, p.529). The psychological contract goes beyond the formal and written contract of employment. It is subjective because it is founded upon an individual’s beliefs, but it is also shaped by the organisation over a period of time culminating in a mutual understanding of expectations in relation to work, pay, flexibility, loyalty, career advancement, etc. Research by Herriot et al. (1997), identified that amongst other things, employees expected the employer to provide a safe and amiable working environment, job security, induction, staff development, flexible working and fair recruitment, appraisal, promotion and redundancy policies and procedures. In return, for providing these, the organisation expects its employees to work the hours they have been contracted to work, consistently perform their work to high standards (both quality and quantity), demonstrate loyalty and commitment to the organisation through the way they deal with situations, customers, and company property and to conduct all their business in a honest and professional manner.

In contrast to the variable rewards, the CIPD (2008) highlight the importance of non-financial rewards such as career opportunities, personal development and recognition contending that these play an important part in encouraging staff
engagement. However, whilst improving workplace facilities and saying ‘thank you’ can make staff feel valued, organisations are now turning to a variety of alternative and more tangible methods of reinforcing the message, not only as part of promoting and rewarding the good performance of existing employees, but also as part of their recruitment and retention strategies (Tulip, 2004). The CIPD (2008f) Reward Survey found that the ‘top ten’ employer-provided benefits were as follows:

Table 2.16: Top Ten Employer-Provided Benefits, Reward Survey (2008f, p.19)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Manufacturing and production</th>
<th>Private sector services</th>
<th>Voluntary sector</th>
<th>Public services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25 days’ or more paid leave (84%)</td>
<td>25 days’ or more paid leave (90%)</td>
<td>Tea/coffee/cold drinks – free (65%)</td>
<td>Training and career development (90%)</td>
<td>25 days’ or more paid leave (90%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and career development (79%)</td>
<td>Training and career development (73%)</td>
<td>Christmas party/lunch (64%)</td>
<td>25 days’ or more paid leave (86%)</td>
<td>Training and career development (85%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tea/coffee/cold drinks – free (70%)</td>
<td>Christmas party/lunch (77%)</td>
<td>25 days’ or more paid leave (73%)</td>
<td>Tea/coffee/cold drinks – free (66%)</td>
<td>Enhanced maternity/paternity leave (78%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christmas party/lunch (60%)</td>
<td>Company cars (75%)</td>
<td>Life assurance (73%)</td>
<td>Christmas party/lunch (63%)</td>
<td>Childcare vouchers (66%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childcare vouchers (62%)</td>
<td>Life assurance (75%)</td>
<td>Training and career development (77%)</td>
<td>Enhanced maternity/paternity leave (63%)</td>
<td>Health and wellbeing benefits (59%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life assurance (50%)</td>
<td>Car allowances (70%)</td>
<td>Car allowances (66%)</td>
<td>Childcare vouchers (50%)</td>
<td>Relocation assistance (58%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car allowances (57%)</td>
<td>Tea/coffee/cold drinks – free (59%)</td>
<td>Childcare vouchers (54%)</td>
<td>Mobile phones (47%)</td>
<td>Carers leave – paid (44%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and wellbeing benefits (57%)</td>
<td>Childcare vouchers (60%)</td>
<td>Health and wellbeing benefits (60%)</td>
<td>Life assurance (44%)</td>
<td>Formal coaching/mentoring schemes (42%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile phones (54%)</td>
<td>Mobile phones (69%)</td>
<td>Dress-down days (60%)</td>
<td>Health and wellbeing benefits (41%)</td>
<td>Mobile phones (35%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhanced maternity/paternity leave (54%)</td>
<td>Relocation assistance (63%)</td>
<td>Mobile phones (69%)</td>
<td>Relocation assistance (40%)</td>
<td>Bicycle loan (34%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage of respondents in brackets

They advise however, that employers would be wise to consult with staff rather than waste money providing benefits that are not valued and to communicate
what is on offer and the worth, as staff are not always aware. The CIPD (2008, p.34) state that:

what most employers appear to have ended up with is a list of reward schemes, yet what they need is an overarching narrative that joins all these up to create a compelling story… for employees of what the organisation aspires to achieve, what values, behaviours, attitudes and performances it wants… and how it will then reward and recognise them, both financially and non-financially.

With the Welfare Reform Act 2007 due to come into effect next year, the advent of the Government’s work and well-being strategy and the requirement for businesses to offer employees access to an occupational pension scheme by 2012, organisations are likely to be reviewing the perks they currently offer (Woods, 2008).

2.15 DEVELOPMENT OF A UNIFIED THEORETICAL MODEL

As stated in Chapter One, one of the objectives was to undertake a critical review of the relevant literature and develop a unified theoretical HRM/HRD performance management framework. This literature review has investigated the complexities of performance management in some detail. It has given an overview of the phenomenon and discussed the importance of:

- Measuring, reviewing and reporting on performance;
- The link between human resource management and performance management
- The role of the line manager in performance management
- Managing performance at organizational level
- Managing performance at school, unit or individual level and
- Tackling issues of poor performance
The review has also covered performance management in relation to some of the key HRM/HRD processes that form part of the Employee Life-Cycle - Recruitment and selection; Induction; Probation; Staff Appraisal; Career development and succession planning; Pay and Reward.

This review now culminates in the development of a unified theoretical model of performance management. The model which is illustrated in Figure 2.23 aims to draw together some of the key performance management thinking detailed throughout the review. It has been created by identifying what are considered to be some of the most critical components of a performance management framework in an attempt to capture the holistic, complex and multi-disciplinary nature of the phenomenon. The component parts of the HRM/HRD performance management framework have been numbered in order to facilitate discussion.
Figure 2.23: Unified Theoretical Model of Performance Management
Component 1 - Culture

Culture has been chosen to form the nucleus of this unified theoretical model. The importance of the culture of an organisation is emphasised by CIPD (2008), Purcell (2003) and HM Treasury (2001). The KPMG (2005) revealed that aside from new performance management systems, procedures and training, there was also a need for a more common understanding of the concept of performance management across the sector including “a cultural shift within HEIs towards an acceptance of performance management…..so that performance review becomes the norm, rather than the exception” (KPMG, 2005, pp.6-7). Armstrong and Ward (2005) also purport that clarity of purpose and the role of culture within an organisation will affect the extent to which performance management resonates and is congruent with the broader culture of the organisation in which it is being applied. The Audit Commission (2002), argue that much can be achieved by helping to create a culture that motivates staff and gives them responsibility, and the Cabinet Office (2004) equate high-performance organisations with having a ‘can-do’ culture. It therefore seems appropriate that Culture be given the required attention by placing it at the centre of the model.

Component 2 - Planning, Supporting and Reviewing

There are three parts to this component (Planning, Supporting and Reviewing), which has been chosen to surround the nucleus of Culture. Torrington et al. (2002) contend that performance management is a cyclical three stage process:
Planning Performance – involving the discussion, agreement and documentation of expectations, including the identification of training and development required to realize performance outcomes.

Supporting Performance – requiring managers to adopt an enabling role, facilitating training and development, coaching and mentoring and being on-hand to talk through any issues or barriers.

Reviewing Performance – a joint manager and employee exercise (both formal and informal) to discuss progress, keep work on track, pick up on any issues, sign off completed objectives and celebrate successes.

This three stage process is not dissimilar to the IIP UK (2008) standard of:

Plan – developing the strategies to improve the performance of the organisation

Do – taking action to improve the performance of the organisation

Review – Evaluating the impact of the performance of the organisation

The WAG (2008) are encouraging of HEIs that pursue Investors in People accreditation and therefore, these Planning, Supporting and Reviewing steps form a central part of the unified model, around which a number of inter-related components revolve, illustrated as follows:
Component 3 - Stakeholder Requirements

HEFCE (2000) identifies 18 broad stakeholder areas each with varying interests in the management and performance of HEIs. It seems appropriate therefore to include Stakeholder requirements as a component part of the model. Beer et al. (1984) and the Audit Commission (2000) stress the importance of identifying the multiplicity of organisational stakeholders – including managers, staff, unions and public stakeholders – in order that their requirements can be established from the outset. The Audit Commission (2002) advises that organisations need to make national agendas work for them by translating them into something meaningful.
Component 4 - Institutional Direction, Strategies and Plans

Component part four has been included in the model to reflect the fact that all HEIs have corporate strategic plans which are approved by the funding councils. Armstrong and Ward (2005) state that the clarity of purpose, direction, priorities and standards within an organisation (or lack of) will affect the extent to which performance management resonates. It is through the organisation’s strategies and plans that this route is articulated. The Audit Commission (2002, p.26) contend that organisations need to find their own framework, which needs to be straightforward enough to “explain what your organisation is about in simple and visual terms to staff and outsiders, what its priorities are and how it measures success”.

Component 5 - Performance Measures

The CUC (2006) developed a Top-Ten list of high-level KPIs with the aim of encapsulating the most critical areas of performance for an institution. In addition, HEIs are measured through the National Student Satisfaction Survey, Research Assessment Exercise and various league tables. For this reason it is important to ensure that Performance Measures (component five) is included in the model. The Audit Commission (2002, p.30) suggest that it is important to measure what matters – “performance measures need to encourage effort around what is important”. HM Treasury (2001) advise that devising measures should involve determining resources, inputs, outputs and outcomes, which in turn will have a close relationship to economy, efficiency and effectiveness. Performance objectives should also be SMART, affording staff greater ownership and clarity.
Component 6 - Structures, Systems and Processes

This component has been included in the model as a means of ensuring organisational functionality. Like the multiple cogs that make up a time piece, structures, systems and processes are a key element of any performance management framework. The structure of an organisation can hinder or help performance and the Cabinet Office (2004) stress the importance of having agreed lines of individual accountability and responsibility. Armstrong and Ward (2005) contend that the process by which individual performance is guided, assessed and rewarded is critical because it sends a highly-visible message to people about what is important and valued in the organisation. Chambers et al. (2007), found that universities have been using a number of OD tools (systems and processes) to assist them in becoming more self-sufficient in managing and effecting change, including: Investors in People, the Excellence Model, Charter Mark, Balanced Scorecard, and ISO accreditation. Other systems included the use of the CUC Key Performance Indicators, tools for personal assessment such as the Myers Briggs Type Indicator, Change Academy and the development of pay and staff appraisal systems in light of the recent NFA.

Component 7 - HRM/HRD – (recruitment & selection, induction, probation, staff appraisal, career development, succession planning, pay & reward)

Following the HEFCE initiative Rewarding and Developing Staff in Higher Education (2002), the profile and standing of HRM has increased in the sector and there is now a greater understanding of the importance of strategically embedding HR in institutional strategies and plans – hence its inclusion in this
model. Managers need to have the right people and resources behind them, fully engaged in delivering the chosen priorities. According to the Audit Commission (2002, p.19) “Ambition, drive, goodwill, flexibility and everyone feeling that they are on the same side matter”. Purcell (2004) found that the way that HR Policies are implemented by line managers is critical and that there appears to be a distinct relationship between employee attitudes and HR policies and practices which can spark the discretionary behaviours that can be demonstrated by committed employees. Beer et al. (1984) contend that the right HRM policy choices lead to four HR outcomes: commitment, competence, congruence and cost effectiveness.

Component 8 - Delivering the Business – (enhancing the student experience through teaching and learning, research, enterprise, service or administration)

Component part eight is a critical part of the unified theoretical model – Delivering the business (enhancing the student experience) is the raison d’ être of HE. Hence, HEIs are engaged in a number of rigorous and sophisticated processes of assessment to ensure academic and quality standards, carried out by the Quality Assurance Agency, professional, statutory and funding bodies. Institutions are also assessed on their provision through the National Student Satisfaction Survey. The Audit Commission (2000) advise that care should be taken over the design and choice of performance indicators, ensuring that performance information focuses on the priorities of the business i.e. the key objectives identified in the strategic plan, complemented by day-to-day operational information. The CUC (2006) developed the Top-Ten high-level
KPIs in key areas of business such as the student experience, learning and teaching, research, knowledge transfer, estates, finance, staff and HRD.

**Component 9 - Actual Results or Outcomes**

All HEIs are publicly accountable – despite their self-governing status. It is therefore critical that they are able to demonstrate actual results. HM Treasury (2001) point out that *Results* (actual performance achieved) should be a component of any successful performance management system. Osborne and Gaebler (1992) claim that what gets measured gets done, leading to actual results. HEIs will be measured against the CUC (2006) Top-Ten high-level KPIs in key areas of business and will be required to make known their actual results or outcomes in their Annual Reports.

**Component 10 - Review and Evaluation**

The Audit Commission (2002) point out that *Review* is often the step in the cycle that is completely left out and that managers need to take time out to reflect and learn from mistakes and feedback. The inclusion of Review and Evaluation as a component in the model should ensure that review becomes an integral part of the performance management process. Kendell-Rice and Taylor (2003) assert that institutions who are using continuous-improvement strategies are finding them to be proven methodologies for increasing effectiveness and building institutional agility. This view is supported by I&DeA (2004). Many of the OD tools identified by Chambers *et al.* (2007) can be used as review and assessment tools including The National Student Satisfaction Survey, Research Assessment Exercise and Institutional Audit (QAA).
2.16 SUMMARY OF LITERATURE REVIEW

Performance management is holistic, complex and multidisciplinary. It is strategic and yet has to be integrated in such a way that it aligns operationally. Performance management is also concerned with team and individual performance, and their continuing professional development within that context.

Osborne and Gaebler (1992) contend that if you measure performance, it can lead to improved performance and demonstrate better accountability. However, performance measurement systems that have not been thought through can be ineffectual in improving performance, since they are time consuming to operate, generate meaningless data and even manage to cause subversive behaviour on occasion. Conversely, identifying which stakeholders need which information and for what purpose ensures that “Focused, Appropriate, Balanced, Robust, Integrated and Cost effective” (HM Treasury, 2001, p.11) measures can be developed. If the measures are then linked to the strategic and operational plans of the business and monitored and reviewed regularly, they should be able to drive organisational improvements and demonstrate public accountability. HEIs have been reporting against a range of HESA indicators for a number of years and are also assessed externally via the QAA. Although they were found to be at a “relatively early stage of development” (CUC, 2006, p.19) in terms of their own KPIs, a Top-Ten list of high-level indicators have been developed by CUC to assist the Governing body in tracking institutional performance. The impact of performance measures on improved performance can be evaluated using the DTI (2008) Prevention, Appraisal and Failure model.
Whilst HR plays a key role in managing performance, HRM/HRD is not the sole territory of the HR practitioner. Managers also need to be concerned with people management and therefore performance management. Models such as the Harvard map of the HR Territory (Beer et al., 1984), start to make the link between HR policies and improved performance and this work is further developed by Purcell (2004), the Cabinet Office (2004), Bevan et al. (2005) and Armstrong and Ward (2005). Critical to achieving performance improvement is “The Big Idea” (Purcell 2003, p.13) and how HR policies are translated into practices that can elicit discretionary behaviour. Of equal importance is the focus on capabilities, development, rewards, measurement, culture and the matter of HR directing too much energy towards compliance related issues rather than influencing managers to take charge.

Although universities have some rather unique features, they are not so atypical that they need to be managed in special ways. Indeed, Sir Michael Bichard contends that “people do expect some leadership, they don’t really want endlessly to be debating ‘where next’?” (Chambers 2005, p.6). Despite the divide between academic and support activity, there are some commonalities when it comes to management development. This is especially so when it concerns the quality of the relationship between individuals and their line managers, which has been found to be critical in securing (or not securing) discretionary effort. Unfortunately, line managers are often promoted because of their technical expertise without any management experience or training. In addition, much of the more traditional work of HR such as discipline, coaching etc. has been devolved to line managers. Greenhalgh (2003) contends that the
HR function needs to take a leading role in coordinating and implementing strategy across the organisation rather than the organisation frequently resorting to external consultants.

Over the years, a number of frameworks, models and standards have been developed to assist organisations manage performance effectively:

- The BSC with its focus on a broad range of performance measurements;
- The EFQM Excellence model with the five enablers and four key result areas focusing on all aspects of organisational performance;
- Investors in People with its cycle of Plan, Do and Review, recommended as suitable for HEIs by Bett (1999) and the WAG;
- Charter Mark/CSE standard with its focus on quality improvements for customer service; and
- The HSE Management Standards approach recommended by UCEA as the safest and simplest way for HEIs to demonstrate compliance in six key areas – Demands, Control, Support, Relationships, Role and Change.

All these models and frameworks have been used to some extent in the HE sector as levers for improving organisational performance, with some HEIs adopting more than one model.

Performance management is described by some as simply being good management. However, many managers are not comfortable with their role in managing performance feeling overwhelmed with other priorities and unsupported by their managers. Torrington et al. (2002) illustrate a simple three
stage approach involving planning, supporting and reviewing performance which can be used as part of everyday management activities and the Audit Commission (2002) describe eight ‘performance breakthroughs’ which they claim make a difference:

- Show your staff you think performance matters
- Join up your thinking and learn
- Take action on what matters most
- Make national standards work for you
- Sign up your staff
- Find your own framework
- Measure what matters
- Help people to perform

Both these approaches provide sound and logical advice which if followed, should assist managers in managing performance effectively.

However, blame and criticism is dispensed by both managers and employees when it comes to managing performance (IIP UK, 2005). Managers complain that staff do not pull their weight, and staff are concerned that their manager is not interested in them and is turning a blind eye when it comes to addressing issues of poor performance amongst their colleagues. Aside from the poor performers, there are a vast majority of forgotten staff who go largely unnoticed and remain a relatively untapped resource. Although the principles for managing performance are the same, the circumstances for dealing with different types of performance are very different, with poor performance requiring a more formal approach. A reluctance to tackle issues of poor performance stems from (amongst other things) fears of confrontation and aggression, destroying a previously good relationship and accusations of
sexual/racial harassment. The ability to give constructive feedback and support for learning and development are critical tools in overcoming this reluctance.

Armstrong and Ward (2005) contend that HR needs to take on a more proactive role in empowering managers to manage performance, whilst following the correct HR policies and procedures. If organisations can ensure that performance is embedded into the people processes, which form part of the ELC – recruitment and selection, induction, probation, staff appraisal, career development and succession planning and rewards, then they are in a better position to secure a competitive advantage through the performance agenda.
Chapter Three

Methodology

Research Approach, Methods and Considerations

April 2009
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CHAPTER THREE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The aims and objectives of this research were set out in Chapter One (section 1.7). This chapter aims to set out the theoretical and practical approaches that were adopted during the research, describing in detail the main research methods that were employed to elicit data that would address the identified research aims and objectives.

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

This research is concerned with making a difference. It aims to address a real life issue in the workplace, which involves improving performance management in an HE institution through the engagement of senior and middle managers.

Kane and O’Reilly-de-Brún (2001) advise that most research is guided by a paradigm or theory, in much the same way as someone is guided to an unfamiliar place by a set of directions. Crotty (1998) provides a similar road map to assist in determining appropriate theoretical and practical approaches to planning and carrying out research projects. The main elements, ontology and epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology and methods are illustrated in Figure 3.1 below and will be used to explain the methodological perspectives relevant to this research.
3.3 ONTOLOGY AND EPISTEMOLOGY

Crotty (2004, p10) states that “Ontology is the study of being. It is concerned with ‘what is’, with the nature of existence, with the structure of reality as such”. He does not make ontology explicit in his model, contending that epistemological and ontological issues are inclined to merge together and both inform the theoretical perspective. Crotty argues that were ontology to be included in the framework, it would sit alongside epistemology. Figure 3.1 has been adapted to reflect this.

At a philosophical level, it is considered that the natural world exists regardless of whether we, as human beings, are conscious of it. In the same way it is considered that the social world exists, albeit in various guises, such as institutions, networks, tribes or nations.
Klein (2005, p.1) regards epistemology as:

one of the core areas of philosophy....concerned with the nature, sources and limits of knowledge....primarily concerned with propositional knowledge, that is, knowledge that such-and-such is true, rather than other forms of knowledge, for example, knowledge of how to such-and-such.

However, people need to be able to construct their own meaning from this reality and in order to do this – even in the world of work – people have to be able to engage with or participate (either as individuals or groups) in real events and situations so as to be able to interpret the reality. However, the way that people interpret this reality can be influenced by a myriad of different factors. Personal characteristics, such as gender, race and age, can influence, as can some of the wider concepts expounded by a number of well-known philosophers, e.g. Marx (1818 - 1883), who contended that the underlying economic structures of the societies in which we find ourselves can sometimes constrain or influence how we think or act, and Durkheim (1858 - 1917) who held that certain values, morals or religious beliefs can shape our life experiences (whether intentional or not). Conversely, Weber (1864 - 1920) believed that societies are sometimes intentionally created by people who are able to influence others through their thoughts, beliefs and actions. Hence, it is recognised that groups of people or individuals are capable of moving from one culture to another, one era to another or one situation to another and each may have a different view of their ‘reality’ (Hughes, 1997), even in relation to the same phenomenon, such as performance management.
3.4 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

From a theoretical perspective, because I regard natural science and social science as two different enterprises, I believe that if you are studying people, you need to explore how they think and act in everyday situations in their natural contexts. This interpretivist standpoint stems from the view that the same stimulus can produce different responses dependent upon how the stimulus is interpreted.

Whilst pure research tends to be curiosity-driven and focuses on generating new ideas or gaining new knowledge, applied research is more concerned with solving practical problems, taking action and developing appropriate interventions in discrete organisational settings. Anderson (2004, p.7) states that “HR research is about ‘advancing knowledge’, but also it addresses organisational issues and provides a process for solving HR problems and contributing to the development of the organisation”.

For this reason, it can be difficult to place HR research in a suitable research paradigm. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) argue that both qualitative and quantitative research arguments are both equally useful and important. They therefore propose that pragmatism offers a:

useful middle position philosophically and methodologically; it offers a practical and outcome-orientated method of inquiry that is based on action and leads, iteratively, to further action and the elimination of doubt; and it offers a method for selecting methodological mixes that can help researchers better answer many of their research questions

(Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p.17).
Hence, what they term as mixed methods research should be viewed as a complementary and third research paradigm.

There are both practical and theoretical claims that support the use of mixed methods in research. The practical argument, aside from giving the researcher opportunities for enhancing and increasing their skills base (Brannen, 2005), reasons that the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods can bring strength to the research, through the exploration of complementary avenues for example, levels of satisfaction amongst staff (using quantitative methods) and underlying thoughts and feelings about satisfaction through the use of qualitative methods (Bryman, 1988). Teddlie and Tashakkori (2003) however, stress that methods should also be chosen to meet the needs of the various research audiences and for their ability to address particular research questions. Hammersley (1992) contends that the differences between the qualitative and quantitative paradigms are often over-stated and that they are not inextricably linked to certain ontological or epistemological ideas. This view is consistent with the belief that no one truth exits and therefore the use of mixed methods is more suited to the complex nature of reality.

3.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Action research has become an increasingly popular methodology amongst small-scale researchers in social care, health and education as its characteristics are well suited for research in the workplace which aims to improve individual and team practices (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight, 1996). Although it is generally accepted that Lewin (1946) was the founder of action
research, a number of action research streams have emerged over the years, each with a different emphasis, for example, Radical Action Research with its emphasis on emancipation and the overcoming of power imbalances and Educational Action Research with its focus on the development of teaching, curriculum and the application of learning in social contexts (O'Brien, 2001). In a similar vein, different research centres have also adopted particular stances which reflect their own views on action research, for example at Strathclyde University and at Bath University – the Centre for Action Research in Professional Practice.

Again, it is difficult to find one viewpoint that covers all the aspects of this research. Whilst I do consider my role as central to the research, I do not consider the research to be a piece of “self-reflective practice” (McNiff, 2002, online) or “first person inquiry” (Reason, 2001, online) where the emphasis is on the self-development of the individual practitioner rather than the organisation. Similarly, whilst I do consider that it is important to engage managers in the research rather than doing research to them or on them, I do not consider that this research is about co-operative enquiry where everyone decides what is to be addressed, what questions should be asked and what the conclusions should be (Reason, 2009, online).

Rather, this action research is more closely akin to what Huxham (2003, p. 240) defines as “a methodology for carrying out research into management and organisations”. She purports that “the way action research is carried out is contingent upon the research aims, the intervention contexts and the
researcher’s intervention style and analytical preferences” (Huxham, 2003, p.241). Importantly, Eden and Huxham (1996, p. 76) maintain that in order to prevent action research being regarded “as a way of excusing sloppy research”, twelve important quality checks must be present to ensure its validity, including, that it is a process of exploration (rather than collection) of the data; that there is a high degree of method and orderliness; that it will generate emergent theory and that the results could inform other contexts.

There appears however, to be a general agreement that an action research approach is intended to:

help the researcher or practitioners to take actions that are planned to make a difference and whose impact will be evaluated…..that evaluation will often set off a further round of research, leading to the analogy that action research is a spiral of activity, a process.

(Arksey and Knight, 1999, p. 47)

This spiral of activity is illustrated in Figure 3.2. The cyclical nature of action research is important since it is seen as:

...a holistic approach to problem-solving, rather than a single method for collecting and analyzing data. Thus it allows for several different research tools to be used as the project is conducted. These various methods, which are generally common to the qualitative research paradigm, include: keeping a research journal, document collection and analysis, participant observation recordings, questionnaire surveys, structured and un-structured interviews, and case studies.

(O’Brien, 2001, online)
3.5.1 Action Research Cycles

At the outset of this thesis, the need for organisational change was identified following a requirement by the WAG for HEIs to embrace the concept of performance management through the development of HR strategies and specific actions within those strategies (HEFCW, 2003a, W03/12HE). This prompted an initial review of literature pertaining to performance management, particularly in the HE sector. This early process informed the first cycle of this action research and the content (or themes for discussion) of the first two sets of interviews with the EMG and SMG were formulated. The outcomes of these interviews enabled two things – first, in response to senior manager’s views,
action was taken to make improvements to some of the existing performance management systems, for example the re-design of the staff performance review scheme. Second, the views of the senior managers and their understanding of performance management, helped to shape the design of the online questionnaire survey used with the middle managers. Concurrently, other distinct and yet complementary action cycles took place, for example the development of the organisational case study which provided a reflective time line analysis of the performance management journey of the institution. In addition, the intermittent observations during away day events and meetings helped to inform on-going organisational developments such as the creation of a set of organisational values and a better consensus of the leadership and management requirements within the organisation.

**Figure 3.3 Action Research Cycles**
3.5.2 My position as researcher

My interest in undertaking this research stemmed from WAG’s requirement for all HEIs to develop HR strategies aimed at addressing a number of staffing issues and specifically, “action to tackle poor performance” (HEFCW, 2003a, W03/12HE, online). This external drive for change was the initial catalyst for undertaking the research.

Whilst working in the HR profession there is also a particular concern to ensure that there are robust HRM/HRD practices in place which assist in recruiting and retaining high quality staff “with the expertise and commitment to sustain – and improve – the performance of institutions in an increasingly competitive environment” (HEFCE, 2002, 02/14, p. 4). As part of my HR and Staff Development remit, I work closely with many of the senior and middle managers and am therefore ideally placed as a “Practitioner-researcher” (Anderson, 2004, p.23) or “Insider Researcher” (Coghlan, 2003, p.452) to carry out research within this context.

However, Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (1996, p.15) warn of the potential for research bias:

Research is not a wholly objective activity carried out by detached scientists. It is …a social activity powerfully affected by the researchers own motivations and values. It also takes place within a broader social context, within which politics and power relations influence what research is undertaken, how it is carried out and whether and how it is reported and acted upon.

As an insider researcher I will therefore need to preserve a level of objectivity.

This research will not only engage with three populations of managers, it will
also do so in different internal organisational contexts. Coghlan and Brannick (2005, p.54) describe organisations as complex entities leading two lives:

*The formal or public life is presented in terms of its formal documentation – mission statement, goals, assets, resources, annual reports, organizational chart, and so on. The informal or private life is experiential, that is, it is the life as experienced by its members – its cultures, norms, traditions, power blocs, and so on. In their informal lives, organizations are centres of love, hate, envy, jealousy, goodwill and ill will, politics, infighting, cliques and political factions, a stark contrast to the formal rational image which organizations tend to portray.*

Within this context, this research will seek to establish the managers’ knowledge and understanding of performance management as a phenomenon and to make sense of how this is translated into action in their natural working environment.

### 3.5 RESEARCH METHODS

It is critical to spend sufficient time at the outset of the research, choosing the most appropriate methods, since data that does not assist in answering the research question is of little value. Patten (1990) advises that rather than feeling bound by the prescribed canons of logical positivism or phenomenology, researchers should err towards making sensible decisions in relation to the methods they choose to deploy. In support of Patten (1990) and Ritchie and Lewis (2003) advocate that researchers should consider, as part of a ‘research toolkit’, all research methods including the use of both qualitative and quantitative techniques, selecting only those methods that appropriately address different research questions and research contexts.
Whilst the research was not anthropological in its purest sense, it was about trying to understand the attitudes, perspectives and contributions of the three management populations - practitioners in the field. It was therefore decided that this research would be predominately qualitative in nature, whilst also utilising some more quantitative approaches where appropriate. Whilst qualitative data focuses more on the experience and meaning - as well as providing a richer type of data, quantitative data tends to focus on numbers and frequencies which can be equally useful in terms of gaining a more holistic understanding of the phenomena Corbetta (2003). In support of this viewpoint, Burns (2000, p. 11) advocates that:

...both approaches are needed since no one methodology can answer all the questions and provide insights on all issues. There is more than one gate to the kingdom of knowledge.

Yin (2003) advises that it is also quite acceptable for researchers to use multiple strategies within a study for example the use of a case study within a survey. Also, Gray (2004) suggests that the case study is the main action research medium. The concept therefore of using the organisation as a case study, which in turn is informed by the action research and other research methods seems to present a good model.

As stated in Chapter One, the objectives of this research were to:

- Undertake a critical review of the relevant literature and develop a unified theoretical HRM/HRD performance management framework.
- Case study the development of the organisation over an eight year period, highlighting some key performance interventions and milestones.
• Establish the overall understanding of performance management and how this is translated into practice, by exploring the perspectives, expectations and contributions of the university’s ‘managers’ at three levels:

  ➢ **The Executive Management Group: (EMG)** who have a strategic responsibility for managing and accounting for the performance of the institution;
  ➢ **The Senior Managerial Group: (SMG)** who have a strategic and operational responsibility for managing the performance of their particular schools/units;
  ➢ **The Middle Managers:** who have a day-to-day operational responsibility for ensuring that standards and levels of performance are met and maintained by teams and individuals within their particular school/unit.

• Critically analyse areas of congruence and dissonance between the three levels of management group, seeking to identify potential areas for improvement and making appropriate recommendations for action in relation to performance management.

• Seek to develop an appropriate HRM/HRD model for managing performance within a post-92 HEI.

Four main methods were chosen as a means of achieving the objectives of the research: case study, verbal observation, open-ended one-to-one interviews and an online semi-structured survey questionnaire. These are illustrated in Table 3.1 and discussed in more detail in the remainder of this chapter. Following this, the ethical and political issues that could potentially impact upon this research are also discussed.
Table 3.1 Research methods

3.6.1 Case Study

Stake (1998, p. 86) claims that a “Case study is not a methodological choice, but a choice of object to be studied. We choose to study the case. We could study it in many ways.” Yin (2003, p.1) on the other hand refers to the case study as “A research strategy …. used to contribute to our knowledge of individual, group, organisational, social, political and related phenomena."

McNeill (1990, p.87) is of the opinion that “A case study can be carried out using almost any method of research, though the less statistical methods are usual.” Yin (2003, p.85) identifies the 6 most commonly used sources of evidence:

- Documentation such as minutes of meetings, memoranda, letters, reports, announcements;
- Archival records such as budgets, computer files and records, personal accounts, calendars, lists of names;
- Interviews;
- Direct observations such as meetings, committees, furnishings of a respondents office;
- Participant observation where one “may assume a variety of roles within a case study situation and may actually participate in the events being studied” Yin (2003, pp. 93-94)
- Physical artefacts
This case study uses all the above sources of evidence except the physical artefacts. “One of the major strengths of a case study is to trace changes over time and relate these changes to previously enunciated theoretical propositions” (Burns, 2000, p. 473). The use of the case study in this action research was determined to be an effective way (or method) of gauging organisational progress through conducting a type of ‘time series’ analysis using an ‘embedded single case design’ where the main unit of the case has been the organisation and the embedded units the various performance management interventions that have taken place over a period of time (Yin, 2003).

Although much of the theory of case study reporting talks about the use of time lines and a logical sequence of events, the actual reality of tracing, recording and tracking real life interventions in an organisation over an eight year period could be described as jumbled, muddled, haphazard and often illogical. Nevertheless, it is hoped that Chapter Four, in which the case study is presented, goes someway to providing an accurate account of events in a humanistic way and that it provides a richer description of the organisational context within which the three management populations operate.

3.6.2 Verbal Observation

Gillham (2003, p. 6) illustrates in Figure 3.2 what he defines as the verbal data dimension which aims to demonstrate the continuum between structured and unstructured questioning:
UNSTRUCTURED

Listening to other people’s conversation; a kind of verbal observation

Using natural conversation to ask research questions

‘Open-ended’ interviews; just a few key open questions, e.g. ‘elite interviewing’

Semi-structured interviews, i.e. open and closed questions

Recording schedules: in effect, verbally administered questionnaires

Semi structured questionnaires: multiple choice and open questions

Structured questionnaires: simple, specific, closed questions

STUCTURED

Table 3.2: The Verbal Data Dimension (Gilham, 2003, p.6)

Whilst the open-ended one-to-one interviews and online semi-structured survey questionnaire can be readily identified along Gillam’s continuum, one of the perhaps more unusual methods - Gillham’s ‘Listening to other people’s conversations; a kind of verbal observation’ (Table 3.2) - was utilised within the case study as a method of capturing interesting snapshot conversations, anecdotes, thoughts, feelings and perceptions that would assist in telling the performance management story. These have been labelled ‘ANECQUOTES’ and are presented in Volume Two, section four. They have been collected over a period of time and are intended to add-value and complement the open-ended one-to-one interviews and online semi-structured questionnaire survey carried out with UL managers.
3.6.3 Open-ended one-to-one interviews

The purpose of all research interviews is to obtain specific types of information. Primarily, interviews are deployed to try and better understand how the sample population think and feel about the topics of concern to the research (Oppenheim, 1992). It is recognised however by Darlington and Scott (2002) that interviews give a certain amount of access to what individuals do, but the only way to find out about what actually happens in a given situation is through observation.

Because of their heuristic nature, interviews are perhaps one of the most popular and logical of the research techniques. They can also elicit a rich mass of data. As Gray (2004, p.214) asserts:

> Interviews are also useful where it is likely that people may enjoy talking about their work rather than filling in questionnaires. An interview allows them an opportunity to reflect on events without having to commit themselves in writing, often because they feel the information may be confidential.

Gillham (2000, p.15) elaborates further:

> It is a curious fact that people are, in general, far more willing to devote an hour and a half to an interview (even of no benefit to themselves) than to give fifteen minutes to the completion of a questionnaire. There are various reasons for this.....but a fundamental one is simple: people like the attention, they like to be listened to, they like their opinions being considered.

Interviews can serve a number of purposes – they can be used in conjunction with other research techniques, for example surveys and they can be used to gather individual thoughts in relation to preferences, attitudes and values (Cohen and Manion, 1997). However, the essential value of interviews is that unlike the self-administered survey, both parties can explore the meaning of the
questions and answers (Darlington and Scott, 2002) and the interviewer is able to encourage participation and involvement through the use of verbal and non-verbal language, clarify any misunderstandings and judge the extent to which the exercise is being taken seriously (Robson, 2002).

Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber (1998, p.7) advocate the use of interviews since “People are storytellers by nature. Stories provide coherence and continuity to one’s experience and have a central role in our communication with others.” McNeill (1990, p.88) supports this view adding that “a vividly told story can make an important contribution to our knowledge.”

Unlike most other techniques, the interview requires the interviewer to have reasonable interpersonal skills. Oppenheim (1992) advocates that an interviewer should be able to move naturally from topic to topic, portray a somewhat neutral stance, be capable of managing personal space, have a friendly, interesting and polite manner, and be able to actively listen in a non-judgemental way.

Oppenheim (1992, p. 67) states that:

……interviewers must, as the saying goes, ‘listen with the third ear’. They must note not only what is being said but also what is being omitted; must pick up gaps and hesitations and explore what lies behind them; and must create an atmosphere which is sufficiently uncritical for the respondent to come out with seemingly irrational ideas, hatreds or misconceptions.
3.6.3.1 Initial design and planning

The total number of managers within UL was found to be relatively small (112), and it was therefore determined that the research should be carried out using the full populations of all managers at three levels:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Management Group</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Total numbers in UL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive Management Group (EMG)</td>
<td>Levels one and two</td>
<td>six members of staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Managerial Group (SMG)</td>
<td>Level three</td>
<td>20 members of staff – (nine HOS and 11 HOU)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle managers</td>
<td>Level four</td>
<td>86 members of staff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the total population of EMG and SMG, seven members (27%) are women. Although under-represented, the women are none-the-less evenly under represented across the three levels as follows:

- Two of the six members of the EMG are women;
- Three of the nine HOS are women and
- Two of the eleven HOU are women.

Under-representation of women at more senior levels within Higher Education is common and was identified in the Bett report (1999) as an issue that needed addressing. 21 of the 26 members of EMG and SMG kindly agreed to participate in open-ended one-to-one interviews, which were held throughout October and November 2004.

- Four out of six from the EMG - (66.66%)
- Eight out of nine from the Heads of Schools – (88.88%)
- Nine out of eleven from the Heads of Units – (81.81%)
3.6.3.2 Elite Interviews

Gillham (2000, p.81) makes reference to what he terms ‘elite’ interviews, where the sample of participants are elite rather than the interview being elite. He describes this elite population as being:

….in a privileged position as far as knowledge is concerned; no doubt in other ways too. These are often people in positions of authority with considerable personal power…and so are members of an ‘elite’ in that sense. Although they may be remote from some aspects of what you are researching, they are likely to have a particularly comprehensive grasp of the wider context, and to be privy to information that is withheld from others. Quite simply, their perspective is different.

It is considered that UL’s EMG and SMG members fit the description of this elite group of managers.

3.6.3.3 Conducting the Interviews

To afford EMG and SMG members the opportunity to reflect and prepare prior to the open-ended one-to-one interviews, an outline of the topics for discussion were circulated in advance. Gillham (2000) advises that interviewing can be energy consuming and should therefore be scheduled wisely. The 21 interviews were conducted over a two-month period.

For the convenience of the individuals, as well as putting them at ease, interviews took place on home territory in the participant’s office. The furniture arrangements were therefore largely pre-determined by the interviewee.
The purpose of the interview was explained in detail at the outset. Participants were also informed that the information collected during the interview would serve a dual purpose:

- To inform the work around UL’s HR Strategy and in particular on taking action to address poor performance;
- To contribute to some research aimed at establishing management views, approaches and practices in relation to performance management.

Oppenheim (1992) recommends that exploratory interviews be recorded on tape, as there is always much information that will have escaped the interviewer over the course of a one to two hour interview. In this way, the information can be analysed in detail afterwards. Participants were informed that the discussion during the interview would be confidential and that their responses would be anonymised. Following this promise of confidentiality, individuals gave permission for their interview to be tape recorded on the understanding that the tapes would be destroyed upon completion of the research and would be kept securely until that time. Darlington and Scott (2000, p.59) advise that:

…..a good quality tape recorder is essential. While in practice many interviewees become used to the presence of a tape recorder quite readily, it makes sense to use equipment that is least likely to cause distraction. Smaller is generally better, preferably with a built-in microphone.

Accordingly, an Olympus VN-240PC Digital Voice Recorder was purchased for this purpose since it was found to be compact, unobtrusive and offered up to four hours of recording time. As a back up, written contemporaneous notes were also made.
All participants were invited to make a closing remark, as a means of raising any pressing issues they felt had not been sufficiently covered during the interview. Participants were thanked for their time and contribution.

Participants will often expect some feedback either on the outcomes of the interviews or the research as a whole. Darlington and Scott (2002, p. 60) advise that “being given a copy of the report or information on how to access it would be minimal.” At this stage, it was only possible to suggest that they would be able to have access to the final report.

3.6.3.4 Transcribing the Interviews

The interviews produced approximately 37 hours of recorded dialogue. In order to analyse the conversations, they were transcribed almost verbatim. This took considerably longer than anticipated because the recording had to be stopped frequently and re-played in small amounts in order to understand the full passage of what was being said. Gillham (2000, p. 9) confirms that:

> Face-to-face interviews are enormously time-consuming…a hundred one hour interviews could be as much as 5,000 hours of work…..one hour takes about ten hours to transcribe into a tidy format: and you can’t do your analysis properly unless it is written down.

3.6.3.5 Analysis and Reporting

Qualitative researchers need to be able to make sense of the vast quantities of data that can be generated from open-ended interviews. Coffey and Atkinson (1996, p.26) advise “assigning tags or labels to the data based on our concepts” thereby condensing the data into manageable and analysable categories.
through a process of coding. They stress however, that the “important analytic work lies in establishing and thinking about such linkages, not in the mundane process of coding” (p.27).

The transcribed interviews were analysed using a system of ‘coding’ which identified common themes or linkages. A full copy of the transcripts from the EMG and SMG open-ended one-to-one interviews has been presented in Volume Two: sections one and two, as they-provide some insightful narrative.

3.6.4 Online Semi-Structured Survey Questionnaire

The identification of the level four management group within UL was complicated by two main factors - an academic re-structuring exercise from nine schools into five, effective from 1 August 2006 and the implementation of a new integrated HR and Payroll system (Midland Trent). Nevertheless, 86 such managers were identified, the majority of whom reported directly to the members of UL’s SMG, who took part in the open-ended one-to-one interviews. The level four managers consisted of 47 academic managers and 39 support managers. Of the 47 academic managers there were twice as many males as females (31 and 16 respectively), whilst the gender balance amongst support managers was evenly split at 19 males and 20 females.

Although it would have been preferable to conduct open-ended one-to-one interviews with UL’s level four managers, using the same format deployed with EMG and SMG, Darlington and Scott (2000, p.53) remind researchers that:

*Qualitative research is…..labour intensive and time consuming, from data collection through to analysis, so there will often be*
practical constraints on the number of people who can be interviewed.

As the sole researcher with a potential 86 level four managers across academic and support staff, it was determined that a more practicable and pragmatic method/approach would be to utilise a semi-structured survey questionnaire. This method however, does have some disadvantages including that “we live in a questionnaire-saturated society and, unless there is some very good reason or very strong appeal, people tend not to bother” (Gillham, 2000, p. 14).

Robson (2002, pp.239 – 256) outlines six main stages of activity relating to carrying out a survey. These stages are now discussed in more detail.

3.6.4.1 The Initial Design and Planning

As advised by Arber (1993) appropriate permission to survey the level four management group was gained from senior managers as part of the initial research proposal.

Whilst the self-completion questionnaire is substantially lower in cost to administer, a serious and common problem is the low response rate (Robson 2002). Consequently, it is critical to get the design right. Oppenheim (1992, p.7) warns that although the use of a survey is often seen as a quick and seemingly easy avenue to take, the design of a survey:

...besides requiring a certain amount of technical knowledge, is a prolonged and arduous intellectual exercise...We often find that, as the research takes shape, our aim undergoes a number of subtle changes as a consequence of greater clarity in our thinking...
Most importantly, the survey needed to elicit the correct type of data. Not only did the survey need to relate to the framework of the open-ended one-to-one interviews carried out with UL’s EMG and SMG, it also needed to provide an opportunity for middle managers to make known their views and front-line practices without being wholly limited to the yes/no responses typically associated with questionnaires.

3.6.4.2 Designing the Questionnaire

Survey questionnaires, although widely used where information needs to be gathered from a large sample of people, are complex to design (Easterby-Smith, et al., 1991). There are a number of issues to consider such as the types of questions to be asked, the layout of the questionnaire, the length of time taken to complete it, and the administrative practicalities of implementing a survey questionnaire.

There are essentially two broad types of survey questions – closed questions and open questions (Yates, 2004).

**Closed questions** are more commonly used in quantitative survey research. They seek to establish fact and require the participant to select a response from a set of alternative answers such as Male/Female, Yes/No/Maybe or True/False. Direct questions such as ‘How old are you’? ‘Are you male or female’? ‘Do you like apples’? etc., will in most cases elicit a ‘correct’ answer - unless of course the respondent chooses not to tell the truth! Closed questions are usually quick for the respondent to complete and for the researcher to
analyse, however although a larger sample size can determine the question you use, the data obtained can sometimes be very superficial since the question does not allow for any exploration as to why the respondent has chosen that response.

Another form of closed question is that which can be usefully employed to measure attitudes, or assess the salience of a particular issue with respondents, often through the use of a Likert Scale or matrix where respondents have a limited number of options, for example, to strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, with a particular statement or range of statements (Arber, 1993). Similar to matrix questions, multiple choice questions can be used to provide a range of options whereby the respondent can choose one or more responses.

**Open questions** on the other hand, seek to establish ‘opinion’. They therefore allow respondents the freedom to give whatever answer they like. With questions of opinion “there can be no assumption about underlying correct answers, indeed, they are useful precisely because people will respond to them in different ways” (Easterby-Smith, et al., 1991, p.119).

Although open questions are ideal for obtaining unanticipated perspectives and a deeper understanding of an issue, they can sometimes make the completion of the questionnaire more difficult and time-consuming for managers, especially those who may be do not make a personal connection with the topic, or are too busy to invest the time. Similarly for the researcher, although the information
obtained is rich and informative, it can be difficult and time consuming to analyse, often requiring the allocation of special coding. However, Gillham (2000, p.13) warns of the pitfalls that open questions can bring “people often can’t be bothered to make an adequate response here: the task of writing being involved and the lack of stimulus of a ‘live interview’”.

The first draft of the questionnaire aimed at 86 level four managers within UL consisted of 12 compulsory questions, one optional and four questions relating to biographical data, namely length of service, category of manager (academic or support), gender, and age. Of the 12 compulsory questions, six were open questions allowing a free range response from participants and six were closed questions involving yes/no responses, multiple choice, matrix, and measured responses.

The questions posed to the middle managers aimed to reflect and sometimes mirror the questions that were asked during the open-ended one-to-one interviews with UL’s senior managers. In addition to covering some of the strategic issues in relation to performance management, other questions aimed to explore further the more operational role that middle managers. It was hoped that these questions would assist in establishing a better overall picture of performance management within UL.

The optimum layout and design of the survey questionnaire is vital. Anything that is likely to reduce the percentage of responses should be avoided, as a low response rate often raises questions of bias. First impressions are important
and can mean the difference between a manager deciding to complete, or not complete the questionnaire. Sharp and Howard (1966) recommend that the maximum number of A4 pages should be 10 and that it should not take longer than 15 minutes to complete.

Questionnaires should be professional. Not only should they be well produced, they should seem easy to complete. Hussey and Hussey (1997, p.165) provide the following general rules for designing questionnaires:

- Explain the purpose of the interview or questionnaire to all participants
- Keep your questions as simple as possible
- Do not use jargon or specialist language
- Phrase each question so that only one meaning is possible
- Avoid vague, descriptive words such as “large” and “small”
- Avoid asking negative questions as these are easy to misinterpret
- Only ask one question at a time
- Include relevant questions only (do not be tempted to include every question you can think of)
- Include questions which serve as cross-checks on the answers to other questions
- Avoid questions which require the participant to perform calculations
- Avoid leading or value-laden questions which imply what the required answer might be
- Avoid offensive questions or insensitive questions which could cause embarrassment
- Avoid questions which are nothing more than a memory test
- Keep your interview schedule or questionnaire as short as possible, but include all the questions required to cover your purposes.

**Table 3.2: General Rules for Questionnaire Design, (Hussey and Hussey, 1997, p.165)**

Following these rules should ensure that the potential time and inconvenience of completing the questionnaire is seen by the respondent as minimal.

Easterby-Smith, *et al.* (1991) suggest that questionnaires should also explain
why and how the respondent was selected, highlight the benefits of participating and give brief instructions on how to complete the questionnaire.

### 3.6.4.3 Piloting the Questionnaire

_Trialling is a protracted process the more you do the more you will see you need to do. New questions, revisions of questions, reorganisation of topics, question order – all need trying out_ (Gillham, 2000, p.23).

Oppenheim (1992) recommends that almost everything about a social survey can and should be piloted, for almost anything that can go wrong, will go wrong. The questionnaire was duly piloted prior to sending it out in order that any ambiguities, anomalies, design deficiencies or errors could be rectified. Colleagues and family were invited to trial the first draft which resulted in several alterations, to both the questions and their sequence. Following this, a second draft questionnaire was sent out to five managers, (three female, two male). Of these five, two occupied academic roles and three support roles. Whilst there were one or two minor points from the pilot group in relation to the questions, two important suggestions emerged. The first, was a recommendation that the survey, rather than being presented as a Microsoft Word document, should be capable of being completed and analysed electronically online, and the second was that the word ‘manager’ needed further explanation (see chapter one, section 1.7) with regard to its relationship with academic staff. Following this feedback, the preamble on the questionnaire was altered to include examples of those staff who would be considered a ‘Manager’ in UL and the possibility of designing a web based questionnaire was investigated.
With regard to web based questionnaires, Gray (2004, p.204) provides the following health warning:

*Web based questionnaires offer many facilities for questionnaire design that are not available in traditional, paper based formats, such as the use of drop-down menus, pop up instruction boxes and sophisticated skip patterns. However the very flexibility of the Web makes the opportunity for design errors all the greater, which may, in turn, affect response rates. It is extremely easy to get “lost” in a website, at which point many users exit the site quickly.*

There was a need therefore, to explore the range of products available and to weigh up the pros and cons of each to determine the most suitable package for the requirements of the research. Technology has advanced considerably over the years to the point where computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) packages such as ATLAS/ti, NUD.IST, The Ethnograph, QUALPRO, HyperQualtz and web based surveys are more commonly used (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996, p.170).

### 3.6.4.4 Final Design and Planning

Following discussion with UL’s Information Services Division (ISD) and experimentation with online survey tools such as Zapsurvey, Keysurvey and Snap, the Prezza Technologies Ultimate Survey software was selected. The software was easy to use, could be supported centrally, had a large range of design and analysis features including an option to export data into other analytical software packages such as Excel or SPSS.

The piloted paper-based questionnaire was transformed into an online survey using the ‘Ultimate Survey’ software as the authoring tool. The software has an option to enable ‘compulsory’ fields and in order to prevent the chance of
incomplete returns, all questions were made compulsory except for the last question where participants were invited to put forward any suggestions or comments that they thought might improve the performance of their school/unit or the University.

Dillman (2006) suggests introducing the web questionnaire with a welcome screen that is motivational, that emphasises the ease of responding and shows how to proceed. He also warns that careful piloting is required. Following the design of the online questionnaire, it was trialled on several occasions in order to test both the technology and the time taken to complete the survey.

3.6.4.5 Data Collection
The survey was distributed electronically to the 86 identified level four managers and activated on the 11 October 2006. After one week, 23 responses had been received. A friendly reminder was sent out through ISD to those who had not yet completed the questionnaires. This boosted the number of returns to 34 (a 39.5% response rate). Gillham (2000, p. 14) purports that “30 per cent has to be seen as fairly satisfactory and more than 50 per cent is good."

A third and final reminder was sent out (again via ISD) on 26 October reminding managers of the closing date - 30 October 2006. Response rates rose again with a total of 44 returns (51%).
The Ultimate Survey software is particularly adept at collecting data and results of the survey can be viewed on screen as and when surveys are returned. The reporting tools within the package, allow the researcher to select a range of graphs and reporting mechanisms, which provide the opportunity to experiment with the selection and presentation of the data until the most appropriate format is found.

3.6.4.6 Analysis and Reporting

50% of the questions in the survey were open questions where respondents could enter as much free text as they felt necessary. As expected, this generated a large amount of data. A common way of dealing with large amounts of this sort of data (as with the interview data) is to code the responses. However, as Robson (2002) points out, there is a risk that the quality of the responses generated by the open questions will be lost, only to be replaced by a defined set of responses. Consequently, as with the interview data, it was decided to pick out common themes from the free text, which could then be reported on in more detail under relevant headings. Biographical data was collected in order that responses by age, gender, type of role and length of service could be analysed where appropriate.

The online survey questionnaire together with the full set of generated data is presented in Volume Two, section three.
3.7 VALIDITY, RELIABILITY AND TRIANGULATION

Research is not a completely accurate science when it involves the study of human beings. What is important however, is that there is an evaluation of the “veracity of results and the soundness of the research conclusions based on the appropriateness of the methodology and the quality of the data upon which the conclusions are based” (Cano, 2008, online).

McNeill (1990) purports that in any research study it is important to demonstrate three things. Firstly, that the groups being studied are representative of others, secondly, that reliable methods have been deployed to collect the evidence and thirdly, that the evidence that has been collected is a true picture of what is being studied.

The three management populations that took part in this research are thought to be representative of senior and middle management groups found within other HEIs. Although job titles can vary between institutions, for example Dean of Faculty v Dean of School, job descriptions and person specifications evidenced through advertisements in the Times Higher Educational Supplement or on jobs.ac.uk show that there is a reasonable equivalence. Whilst the management groups were therefore found to be representative of the wider HE population, it would be difficult to claim that the results could be widely generalised because the focus was limited to one particular HEI. The results however, might be used by other HEIs for benchmarking purposes.
The issue of reliability within this research was addressed in a number of ways. The open-ended one-to-one interviews with the EMG and SMG were structured and administered in the same way so as to provide a more reasonable likelihood of generating consistent responses. Some of the questions in the survey questionnaire also reflected those asked during the one-to-one interviews, again to provide some consistency. The open-ended one-to-one interviews were all taped and full transcriptions were made, in order that the responses could be shown to be reliable in terms of accuracy. In a similar fashion, the online semi-structured survey questionnaire was completed electronically by the middle managers themselves and is therefore a true reflection of their responses.

Validity is said to be the extent to which a study is well grounded, defensible and efficacious in measuring what it purports to measure. In order to ensure that the questions utilised in the open-ended one-to-one interviews and the online semi-structured survey questionnaire were appropriate in terms of investigating the performance management phenomenon, they were designed to be broadly similar to those used in the IRS Employment Trends Performance Management Survey, first sent out to employers in May 2003. In addition, the online semi-structured survey questionnaire was piloted before distribution in order to test that the questions made sense and measured what they were designed to measure.

Data triangulation is one way of demonstrating reliability, validity and representativeness. “With data triangulation, the potential problems of construct
validity also can be addressed because the multiple sources of evidence essentially provide multiple measures of the same phenomenon” (Yin, 2003, p.99). Data triangulation concerns collecting reports from different participants or groups of participants in a study. Whilst this research involves ‘managers’ as a group, it is concerned with the different hierarchical levels that they occupy within the organisation – levels one to four. Sands and Roer-Strier (2006) identify five types of triangulated data: (1) same story, same meaning; (2) same story, different interpretations; (3) missing pieces; (4) unique information; and (5) illuminating. In the same way, the responses between the different levels of management can be triangulated.

Burns (2000, p.419) suggests that the exploitation of a variety of methods helps to minimise potential methodological and personal bias because information is derived from a number of different angles “If for example the outcomes of a questionnaire correspond to those of an observational study of the same phenomena, the researcher will be more confident about the findings.” In a similar fashion, this research has utilised four methods in an attempt to provide a more rounded view. The data collected will also be compared with the existing literature on performance management, highlighted in Chapter Two.

3.8 ETHICS AND POLITICS
There are a number of ethical issues and political dynamics that need to be taken into consideration when carrying out research, especially within the researchers place of employment. Darlington and Scott (2000, p.31) aptly remind researchers that:
Research has the capacity to harm the legitimate interests of the organisation and the professional and personal reputations of the individuals it employs.

Issues around commercial sensitivity will therefore need to be taken into consideration. Where public damage or harm is likely to be caused to an organisation, it can be prudent to ensure anonymity through the use of a pseudonym. Similarly, the findings may portray some managers in a favourable light, whilst others may feel threatened or harmed because potential weaknesses in performance may be revealed. One of the most obvious concerns therefore, will be around the levels of anonymity afforded to the management groups. Although it will be important to report responses in such a way that individuals and their locations are not named, there is ultimately no guarantee that individuals will not be identified by others, not least because of their lexical connotations (Coghlan and Brannick, 2005).

To this end a number of steps have been taken to protect both the organisation and the professional and personal reputations of the participant groups:

- The organisation has been given a pseudonym, as have all the participants.
- Gender references have been changed at random to further anonymise individuals.
- It has been agreed (via the UL Research Degrees Committee) that the results of this research will be withheld for a period of twelve months.
3.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY
This chapter has set out the aims and objectives of the research and explored the main elements of social research – ontology and epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology and methods – as defined by Crotty (1998). Because the research was context-bound and aimed to address a real-life issue an Action Research approach was considered to be appropriate. The methodology was predominantly qualitative in nature, whilst also utilising quantitative approaches where appropriate. Research methods deployed included: a case study, verbal observation, open-ended one-to-one interviews and an online semi-structured survey questionnaire. The total populations of three management groups were invited to participate in the research, generating a 51% response rate from the middle managers, 85% participation rate from the senior managers and a 66% participation rate from the executive managers.

The next chapter, Chapter Four, will present a case study of the UL performance management journey, detailing some of the main performance management interventions that have been deployed over the last eight years.
Chapter Four

A Case Study

Improving Performance, the UL Odyssey

April 2009
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CHAPTER FOUR

4.1 ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF LLAREGGUB

A brief outline of the University of Llareggub was given in Chapter One. This section of Chapter Four serves to provide more detailed information on the structure and day-to-day management arrangements.

4.1.1 Organisational Structure

UL currently operates from four teaching campuses within the City of Llareggub – Tuscan Campus, Ionic Campus, Doric Avenue Campus and Corinthian Gardens Campus (see Appendix 11).

4.1.2 Management Arrangements

Ultimate responsibility for UL’s strategic direction and effective management (including the appointment and performance of the Vice-Chancellor) lies with UL’s Board of Governors, who determine the mission and educational character of UL and oversee its activities. They ensure that UL remains solvent at all times through the effective and efficient use of its resources and determine the terms and conditions of employment.

The Board of Governors is advised and informed by seven committees that report to them on a regular basis:
Below the Board of Governors, is the management structure of UL, which informs and advises the Board of Governors. The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Dumbledore, currently has five senior members of staff who each manage a portfolio of services and report directly to him – the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research), Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching), and three Directors, the Director of Operations, Director of Marketing and Communications, and Director of Finance. These are the EMG who are responsible for the efficient and effective running of the day-to-day business of UL.

UL’s Senior Managerial Group (SMG) are currently made up of five Deans of School and eleven Heads of Unit. Following a recent academic re-structuring exercise, the academic work of UL was re-organised from nine schools into five (effective from 1 August 2006). The Llareggub School of:

- Management
- Education
- Art and Design
- Health Sciences
- Sport
These schools are the main business of the organisation. Deans of School are supported by a School Management and Planning Team including a Director of Learning and Teaching, Director of Research, Director of Enterprise, and a Business Support Manager. The five schools contribute to UL's Academic Board - which is the guardian of Academic Standards. They do this through various Boards: Learning and Teaching, Research and Enterprise, Academic Standards and Research Degrees Committee. The academic work of the schools and the enhancement of the total student experience is supported by a number of 'support units' which contribute to the administration of UL (see Table 4.1):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product Design and Research</th>
<th>Learning and Teaching Development Unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research and Enterprise Support Unit</td>
<td>Clerk to the Governors Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy Development Office</td>
<td>Academic Registry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Office</td>
<td>Secretariat to EMG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications, Marketing and Student Recruitment</td>
<td>Welsh Language Unit and Collaborative Provision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance Department</td>
<td>Library and Information Services</td>
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Table 4.1: The University of Llareggub Support Units
The HR context within which this research has been carried out, is represented in Figure 4.1. HR provides an integrated HRM/HRD service derived from UL’s CSP and delivered through the HR Strategy. The implementation of projects such as the NFA and HERA are also resourced from within HR.

**Staff Development** for example: provision of corporate staff development activity, induction, staff performance review, Investors in People, continuing professional development.

**Business Support** for example: succession planning, pay and reward, employment law, employee relations and case work.

**Operational HR** for example: organising recruitment, issuing contracts, administering maternity, statistical recording.

**Health, Safety and Wellbeing**, for example: health and safety systems and audits, occupational health referrals, sickness absence monitoring.

Figure 4.1: Human Resources at the University of Llareggub, an Integrated Function.

### 4.2 MANAGEMENT INTERVENTIONS

The rationale for conducting this research was the recognition by EMG, of the pressing need to engage with the performance management agenda within UL, in response to the range of pressures detailed in chapter one. Throughout the course of this action research (as an insider researcher), considerable time has been spent observing UL managers (see Chapter Three, verbal observation,
3.6.2) at different times and in different settings as part of their day-to-day working lives, for example, senior management development events, workshop sessions, day-to-day meetings, project work and committees. During this time UL managers have been involved in the development and implementation of a number of performance management interventions.

This chapter charts the main performance management interventions taken by UL from 1999–2008. These have been colour coded and mapped onto a time-line in an attempt to visualise the journey over the last eight years (see Table 4.2). This chapter describes each of the key performance management interventions in more detail and aims to draw out some of the inter-relationships between them.
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Table 4.2: Time-line Illustration Mapping Key Performance Interventions taken by the University of Llareggub
4.2.1 Charter Mark/Customer Service Excellence

UL was first awarded the Charter Mark/CSE in 1995. Successful reviews in 1998, 2001, 2005 and most recently in April 2007, meant that UL was able to celebrate its unique achievement as the first UK university to be awarded the Government’s Charter Mark for a fifth time (see Chapter Two, section 2.6.5).

4.2.2 Appointment of a New Vice-Chancellor

In 1998, Professor Dumbledore returned to Mid-Wales to join UL as Vice-Chancellor. Following his appointment, he undertook a major academic and administrative re-structuring exercise on the university involving changes to the Articles of Government and the replacement of the existing four faculties and 15 schools with nine schools, providing Degree and Higher National Diploma courses in subjects related to Applied Sciences; Art and Design; Business; Education; Health and Social Sciences; Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure Management; Lifelong Learning and Product and Engineering Design. Professor Dumbledore’s re-structuring exercise coincided with the devolution of Government and the establishment of the National Assembly for Wales, who, with devolved powers over the education system in Wales, prioritised the promotion of the concept of Lifelong Learning pledging that higher education would be accessible to half of the under 30’s population by 2010 (Marsden, 2005). A new vision and mission was agreed by the Board of Governors in December 2000 and updated in 2004 (see Appendix 1).
4.2.3 Investors in People

Recommendations for HEIs to adopt the IiP standard can be found in the Dearing Report (1997) and the Bett Report (1999). In 1999, UL’s Board of Governors committed to achieving the IiP standard (see chapter two section 2.6.4).

In order to achieve this, a distinct Staff Development Unit (SDU) was established in 2000. Without formal systems or processes in place (such as induction or staff review), the commitment to achieve IiP was not communicated publicly to members of staff. Instead, from 2000 – 2002 work was undertaken within the new SDU to establish a co-ordinated programme of staff development activity that focused on learning and teaching, research and enterprise, health and safety, IT and management development. In addition a process of corporate staff induction was established. A staff review and development scheme was designed and implemented following extensive consultations with Unison and NATFHE (now UCU). As part of the implementation process, 150 staff were trained as reviewers using the Higher Education Staff Development Agency (HESDA) to assist in the delivery.

With these basic systems of Staff Review and Induction in place, UL firstly devised a three phase strategy for achieving IiP and then publicly made known to staff its intention to embark on the journey towards IiP recognition, choosing to utilise a ‘Building Block’ approach involving seven volunteer sections of the university as part of phase one:
By July 2003, all seven building blocks had achieved liP within their own right. Following this, EMG announced that UL’s remaining schools and units would be required to gain liP status as part of phase two, prior to going for corporate convergence (phase three) in 2004.

Due to the uniqueness of each school and unit, a decision was taken to continue with the building block approach. This methodology provided the flexibility for schools and units to progress towards assessment in their own way, at their own pace, yet within the overall corporate timescale. All but four of the 20 building blocks achieved liP status by the July 2004 deadline. The remaining four however, were more problematic, necessitating the corporate assessment deadline to be extended to December 2005.

January 2005 saw a concentrated effort in relation to progressing UL’s journey towards successfully achieving liP and a mock assessment took place in March 2005 with the purpose of identifying and addressing potential shortfalls before the bona fide assessment in December 2005. The mock assessment (Evans 2005, p. 13) generated a number of recommendations, including:

- EMG and UL’s Board of Governors
- Personnel (forerunner of Human Resources)
- SDU
- Learning and Teaching Support Unit
- Accommodation Services
- UL’s Day Nursery
- Sports Facilities
- **Balance empowerment with accountability.**
- Clearly identify line management accountability, define required behaviours and measure management effectiveness (Indicators 3 and 8).
- **Define, promote and manage values and behaviours** and in doing so achieve culture change (Indicator 5 - strategic planning).
- **Construct, promote and manage interim strategies and plans** (Indicator 5) in order to prepare the organisation in advance for a successful merger (and have alternative strategies and plans, also publicised, for the contingency that the merger does not happen). Consult on and publish plans in user-friendly single sheet leaflets to all staff.
- **Communicate HR strategy openly. Make current processes explicit** (e.g. Indicator 6). Promote the IiP message correctly - it is not viewed as part of HR’s strategy, nor is it widely accepted as a performance improvement tool of benefit to UL. Ensure that part-time staff are included in processes.
- **Concentrate on evaluating the benefits of people development activities at all levels** (Indicators 10, 11, 12) and thus celebrating success corporately (Indicator 3) at working group and individual levels by sharing how the contribution has impacted on the performance of UL (build the loyalty factor).

Over the following months, UL put in place actions to address the recommendations in preparation for the corporate assessment, which took place 14-16 December 2005 and involved 4% of staff, drawn from across the organisation. As this was a convergence of previously recognised Building Blocks, the assessors focused on observing a number of naturally-occurring meetings. This included a meeting of the then Heads of Schools and Units (SMG), several school/unit team meetings (bearing in mind the length of time from first recognition), a meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC), the Staff Development Panel and a series of one-to-one interviews.

The three assessors confirmed that the principles and indicators of the April 2000 version of the standard were fully met; and the Lead Assessor had no hesitation in recommending UL to the IiP recognition panel. On January 19th
2006, UL was proud to be awarded institution-wide IiP status – one of 36 higher education institutions in the UK to meet the standard. Teamwork, communication and commitment to developing the organisation were among UL’s many strengths highlighted in the Assessment Feedback Report (Banham et al., 2005). UL was also commended for the consistency of evidence found and will continue to work within the principles of the IiP standard in preparation for review prior to December 2008. The Plan – Do – Review – model of IiP is reflected in the unified theoretical model (chapter two) as Planning, Supporting and Reviewing Performance.

4.2.4 The Establishment of a Staff Development Unit

Following the commitment of UL’s Board of Governors to achieve the IiP Standard, a decision was taken by EMG to set up a dedicated SDU. Whilst it was evident that there was staff development activity occurring across the university, it was also evident that there was no co-ordinated or central approach to staff development. It was therefore clear that if UL was to make any progress with IiP, staff development would need to be developed as a strategic, valuable and more visible operation within UL.

The SDU opened in January 2000. An internal self-assessment of how UL measured up against the IiP standard highlighted a number of deficiencies - the absence of a coordinated corporate staff development programme, no formal induction process for new staff and the lack of a workable staff review process
through which staff development needs could be identified. Mindful of the inadequacy of these basic processes, UL’s EMG decided to deploy a more delicate approach to achieving the liP standard, thereby allowing the SDU to work collaboratively with Heads of Schools and Units to put in place the appropriate foundations.

In 2003, UL’s EMG took the decision to integrate the staff development function into a newly-formed HR department. Whilst it is not uncommon for staff development to be located within HR, UL sought in the first instance to integrate the staff development function into different roles throughout HR. This resulted in diluting the original intention of having a co-ordinated and central approach to staff development and following a review in February 2005, a decision was taken to re-launch staff development as a distinct but complementary function within HR.

Previously in August 2004, EMG agreed to establish a UL Staff Development Panel, with the purpose of directing staff development within UL at a strategic level. This panel was established in September 2004 and its terms of reference are detailed in Appendix 12.

4.2.5 Corporate Induction

Recognising that a planned and managed induction process is paramount to new members of staff feeling welcome, becoming integrated into the
organisation and being able to achieve optimum levels of performance sooner rather than later, UL introduced a formal and mandatory Induction process in January 2001, for all new staff i.e. internal and external appointments, those changing roles or work location, and those on full and part-time, temporary or fixed term contracts.

As reflected in the literature review (section 2.10), Induction at UL is regarded as an important and ongoing process rather than a one-off event. For new members of staff, Induction is perhaps rather akin to completing a jig-saw puzzle; piecing together small amounts of information until they are able to see the whole picture. To ensure that this happens quickly and effectively, UL requires that the process is planned and managed by managers. Since 2006, the completion of a planned induction programme is now a requirement of the probation period for new staff and should therefore be completed within this timeframe (six months for grades one to five and 12 months for grades six to nine).

New members of staff need to have information about:

- Their immediate working environment,
- How their work relates to that of other people in UL’s schools or units,
- How they fit into the organisation as a whole.

To achieve this, the induction process is made up of a number of stages and components which are illustrated below. An Induction programme is likely to
vary according to different roles and responsibilities and there is an expectation that line managers will plan an appropriate programme with each new member of staff:

Figure 4.2: Components of Corporate Induction at UL

4.2.5.1 Workplace Induction

Workplace Induction is vitally important for all new staff and is usually conducted by the Dean of School or Head of Unit together with other appropriate members of staff. It is designed to introduce staff to:

- Their immediate work surroundings, colleagues, roles and responsibilities
- Basic health, safety and well-being within the work environment
- Basic corporate and office systems, equipment, personal identification and access rights
- Appropriate school/unit policies, procedures and practices
• Corporate strategic plans, school/unit plans, corporate policies and procedures such as sickness absence, probation, staff review, equal opportunities etc
• Key work objectives/targets together with appropriate and relevant development requirements.

A booklet entitled ‘Effective Staff Induction’ has also been produced to assist managers in carrying out this important task.

4.2.5.2 Corporate Induction

The purpose of the half day Corporate Induction session (compulsory) is to assist staff in settling into UL as smoothly as possible by:

➢ Introducing them to UL as an organisation
➢ Outlining its structures and management arrangements
➢ Identifying a range of functions and services which will be important to new members of staff
➢ Providing an opportunity to ask questions and meet the VC as well as other new staff from across UL

4.2.5.3 Workplace Health and Safety Training

This course is compulsory for all staff and provides an introduction to UL’s Health and Safety Management systems and responsibilities, including information on emergency evacuation, first aid provision and accident reporting.
4.2.5.4 Diversity in the Workplace Module

The Diversity in the Workplace training module is compulsory for all members of UL staff. The on-line module takes approximately one hour to complete, during which time staff become familiar with the legislation; explore some of the broader issues of equality and their responsibilities and rights as a UL employee. The module also contains links to relevant newspaper and journal articles which assist in linking the theory to real life examples.

4.2.5.5 Academic Induction

The half day induction session is compulsory for academic staff, and provides participants with an overview of UL’s strategic priorities for Learning and Teaching, Research and Enterprise, whilst also providing some useful information on Blackboard – UL’s Virtual Learning Environment, Student Services and the Academic Registry Function. In addition, the session investigates issues relating to enhancing and assuring the quality of academic provision.

4.2.5.6 Enhancing the Student Experience

The premise of this programme is that no matter where staff work in UL they all have an opportunity to enhance the student experience, either directly via the teaching and services they provide, or indirectly through supporting the work of others. Good customer service is essential to the survival and prosperity of any university and UL is no exception. The programme is currently under review.
4.2.5.7 Information Technology

It is highly recommended that new members of staff avail themselves of training in areas of technology that are relevant to their particular role for example, Blackboard, CAMS, CIMIS, Business Objects, SharePoint, Microsoft Outlook and Microsoft Office.

4.2.5.8 Supporting Information

All new staff are provided with a corporate information pack. Documents contained in this pack are also available on the website thereby enabling existing staff to keep abreast of organisational developments. Information includes:

- An A–Z of UL, so that staff can navigate their way around and know who to contact;
- A summary of UL’s Corporate Strategic plan 2007 – 2011, detailing UL’s main aims and objectives;
- An introduction to Equal Opportunities, to assist in preventing discriminatory practices;
- UL’s Quality Standards framework document, describing the values and behaviours promoted at UL;
- A structure chart of UL’s management arrangements;
- Information on UL’s recognised Trade Unions, UCU and Unison;
- Information on how to gain membership to UL’s sporting facilities;
- UL’s Staff Performance Review scheme, setting staff objectives and identifying staff development needs;
- Staff Guidance to UL’s Welsh Language Scheme;
- The Research Review, spot-lighting research developments at UL;
- The Annual Review, celebrating UL’s achievements and successes.
All staff within UL have some responsibility for supporting the Induction of new members of staff with whom they come into contact. UL expects that staff will carry out this responsibility in a positive and constructive manner. The SDU currently facilitates, monitors and evaluates Corporate Induction events.

**4.2.6 Staff Review/Appraisal**

Implemented in April 2001 following extensive consultation, UL’s Staff Review and Development Scheme (SRandDS) was a developmental tool which aimed to engender continuous improvement. The scheme facilitated the opportunity for all staff to share their ideas and shape the future of UL through their contribution to the formulation and achievement of strategic and operational aims and objectives. Whilst there was an emphasis on the importance of affording a one-to-one discussion and review, the scheme did not preclude (where appropriate) the deployment of other models of review, for example, team review or peer assessment.

The success of any scheme is dependent upon its integration into the organisation at a strategic level and effective dialogue at operational level between all concerned with the process (Wolff, 2008). Internal evidence suggested however, (in line with Beesley *et al.*, 2004) that there was an inadequate association or link made between the SRandDS and UL’s strategic aims, objectives, operational plans and strategies, as well as inconsistencies in the application of the scheme across UL (see chapter two, section 2.12.3). In
addition, the SRandDS had no provision for rating individual performance levels which hindered managers’ ability to make objective decisions in relation to progressing individuals through the recently agreed pay and grading structure as part of the NFA. A new Staff Performance Review Scheme (SPRS) was therefore negotiated with staff and the Trade Unions. This was implemented in August 2007 as part of the NFA. The purpose and general principles of the new scheme are to:

- provide a structured approach to objective setting and agree clear action plans to support the aims of UL;

- review individual performance annually and to provide a formal context for feedback;

- identify personal development needs and learning outcomes and arrange a means of meeting them, in order to improve the individual’s and UL’s performance;

- identify organisational and other factors which may have a bearing on the future objectives of the individual and their priorities;

- provide an open and transparent process which is consistent with UL’s Equal Opportunities Policy;

- provide a further opportunity for staff to give feedback to managers on any matters of concern to them including recommendations for school/unit and UL strategies;

The SPRS applies to all employees of UL irrespective of the tenure and duration of their contract of employment, excepting senior post holders i.e. those appointed by the Board of Governors. The SPRS aims to support a
constructive partnership between staff and managers through matching individual and organisational needs and aspirations. The SPRS offers a number of benefits to staff including:

- recognising individual contribution and achievement that is of ‘added value’;
- providing a context for constructive evaluation of individual performance;
- supporting a systematic basis for determining appropriate development and training;
- enabling staff to review their own performance and to clarify organisational needs and priorities;
- enabling staff to engage and participate further in the development of the strategy within the school/unit and UL.

It is hoped that the SPRS will also benefit UL through improving:

- organisational performance;
- quality and efficiency;
- working relationships between managers and staff;
- commitment and morale.

For the first time the organisation has a scheme that enables managers to assess individual performance against the achievement of objectives i.e. whether they have been **fully met, partially met** or **not met**.
4.2.7 National Framework Agreement

From March 2002 to July 2003, the Joint Negotiating Committee for Higher Education Staff (JNCHES) produced a plethora of guidance for the sector (UCEA, 2002-08) including:

- Equal Pay Reviews - (March 2002)
- Role Analysis and Job Evaluation - (March 2002)
- Fixed Term and Casual Employment - (July 2002)
- Partnership for Equality – Action for HE - (February 2003)
- Work-Life Balance - (July 2003)

Further to this, and following extensive consultations in 2003, a National Framework Agreement for the Modernisation of Pay Structures within HEIs was developed in partnership between the Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA) and the Trade Unions at that time, including NATFHE, AUT and Unison. The NFA agreed a move towards a 51-point single pay spine across different staff groups and a common pay and grading structure, underpinned by a job evaluation/role analysis process. The Higher Education Role Analysis tool (HERA) was specifically developed for this purpose and subsequently adopted by many HEIs including UL (see chapter two, section 2.14).

As part of this process UL committed to implementing the NFA within the prescribed timescales by 1st August 2006 and began formal negotiations with
both NATFHE (now UCU) and Unison to determine the detail in relation to job families, pay bands, grading and assimilation to post.

The pay-model was developed with reference to the principles endorsed by UL’s Board of Governors, HERA and the complexities of UL’s existing pay structures. The pay-model provided the majority of staff with a minimum of one increment, plus the effect of assimilation to the new single pay spine. The pay-model also contains nine grades, which are subdivided into two broad categories for HE staff within the following job families:

**Grades (1-5):** Five grades at the lower end of the pay spine for staff whose jobs are manual, technical, and administrative;

**Grades (6-9):** Four grades at the upper end of the pay spine for staff whose jobs are academic (including research), professional staff and technician demonstrators.

Each grade is separated from the next grade by a hard line. There is no overlap in grades. Promotion to a higher grade is through existing procedures that are based on a post being required at the higher level, or existing agreements on progression and promotion, i.e. Lecturer to Senior Lecturer, and Principal Lecturer promotion. Each band within a grade is subdivided with a dotted line. This dotted line is a point at which progress will be reviewed with reference to the new SPRS effective from August 2007. The pay-model also makes a deliberate distinction between groups of grades in order to demonstrate broadly
similar terms and conditions of service from an equal pay perspective. In practice, this means that support staff in grades 6-9 will have the same annual leave entitlement (35 days) as comparable academic staff in grades 6-9. Similarly, all staff in grades 1-5 will receive 30 days annual leave (25 days in the first year of service).

All staff have the right of appeal against their assimilation to the new single pay scale through a formal procedure that forms part of the agreement.

### 4.2.8 Corporate Strategic Plan

HEFCW annually requests that UL produce a five year CSP and that in complying with this request, UL produces a single plan which is intended for a number of purposes and audiences, both internal and external. The Audit Commission (2002) stress the importance of organisations being able to explain to stakeholders in simple terms, what the priorities are and how success will be measured.

The Corporate Strategic Planning process is predominantly driven by the consultative committee process already established within UL. Each year, the Planning and Resources Committee undertakes to either revise or re-write the CSP, with each stage of development being reviewed through both Academic Committees and Governor Groups. A final iteration of the plan is then approved
and signed off by the Vice-Chancellor and Chair of the Board of Governors at the July meeting of the UL Board of Governors.

The plan is then provided to HEFCW who, in turn, provide annual feedback on the CSP. Internally the plan is hosted on the UL intranet which is designed to be accessible by all staff. Evidence suggests however, that few staff avail themselves of the opportunity to read and digest the plan and the key strategic objectives contained within. Following publication of the CSP each school, and from 2005-06 each unit, must produce a development plan which is commensurate with the objectives and targets of the CSP. Again it is debatable as to how far this development plan is owned or subsequently communicated within the school/unit/institution.

### 4.2.9 Human Resources Strategy

In 2002, all English HEIs were tasked by HEFCE to develop HR strategies designed to address six priority areas - recruitment and retention, staff training and development, equal opportunities, regular reviews of staffing needs, annual performance reviews for all staff and action to tackle poor performance. A year later, HEFCW (circular W03/12HE) invited all Welsh HEIs to submit full or emergent HR Strategies.

*Human Resources work in the sector is central to the realisation of the Assembly’s vision for Higher Education in Wales. That is why we have been encouraging institutions to include human resources development as a core element of their strategic planning* (HEFCW, 2003, online)
Along with other Welsh HEIs, UL submitted an ‘emergent’ HR strategy for 2003/2004. Feedback from HEFCW to the Welsh sector on their HR strategies, recognised many of the overall strengths, but also noted common areas of weakness which included non-specific, poorly-focussed objectives and a lack of measurable targets. HM Treasury (2001) stress the importance of translating strategy into practice through the use of SMART objectives and performance measurements that are Focused, Appropriate, Balanced, Robust, Integrated and Cost Effective.

Identifying a need across the sector for further development work, HEFCW commissioned the Office for Public Management (OPM) to assist HEIs in Wales on the development and use of HR strategies and HR information systems. In January 2005, OPM provided individual feedback to institutions on their HR strategies submitted to HEFCW in 2004, focusing around the extent to which institutional strategies address the HEFCW priorities for the development of HR in the sector which were as follows:

- **Improving practice in the same six priority areas used in 2003;**

- **Facilitating the development of suitable HR information systems to support the effective monitoring and evaluation of HR practice and performance and to develop institutions’ capacity to set measurable targets as part of fully developed HR strategies;**

- **Encouraging institutions to reward teaching through their HR Strategies, specifically by making excellence in teaching a demonstrably genuine criterion for promotion of academic staff, broadly defined.**

  (HEFCW W05/15HE, 2005b, p.1)
UL’s HR strategy was required to be submitted again to HEFCW in August 2005, together with the CSP. This was not required in 2006 and for 2007/08 is currently undergoing internal review and consultation.

Despite the development and implementation of an HR strategy, observation suggests that schools/units do not fully embrace the HR strategy when developing their annual plans and do not always ensure that HR policies and practices are embedded and applied consistently throughout the organisation.

### 4.2.10 Merger Talks

The WAG’s agenda of re-configuration, collaboration and merger was first set out in *The Learning Country* (WAG, 2001) which advocated the establishment of a strong future for Welsh Universities, with high quality research and teaching. It set out WAG’s support for actively promoting increased collaboration and well-found mergers between HEIs in Wales, as a method of securing a competitive and sustainable future for the higher education sector in Wales.

On March 11 2003, the UL and the University of Poppleton announced their intentions to become a new ‘super-university’ for Wales by August 2004, creating over 30,000 student places - thereby becoming one of the largest in the UK and importantly the predominant Institution in Wales. In a joint statement,
the respective chairpersons of the governors of the two universities, Mr. Roger Thomas at Poppleton and Mr. Rubeus Hagrid at UL said:

This is about creating a state-of-the-art institution for the 21st century. It will offer a greater range of innovative courses, with the best academic talent and a flexible approach to learning. It will compete with the best modern universities in the UK, Europe and internationally, bringing huge advantages to students, to staff and to Wales.

(Curtis, 2003, online)

Following this announcement, working groups from UL and Poppleton staff were quickly established to project plan the start of a newly-merged, operational institution, by August 2004. Counterparts from schools and units across both universities known as “Day One” groups undertook various exercises to identify due diligence, commonalities and differences and set out action plans for the future.

Despite considerable progress having been made, nine months later, on 17 December 2003, talks between the two universities were halted. Fundamental differences between the two institutions were highlighted by UL’s Chair of the Board of Governors, Rubeus Hagrid who stated on BBC News Wales that:

The board of governors has determined to withdraw from any further work on merger with the University of Poppleton. It has become evident to us that the position on how best the two universities can address the needs of Wales and the objectives outlined in the Reaching Higher Strategy are different for UL and for the University of Poppleton

(BBC News, 17 December 2003, online)

The sudden end to this relationship caused two different camps to form amongst staff; those who were happy to see UL remain as an autonomous
institution and those who saw the end of discussions between the two universities as potentially devastating to UL’s long term-survival. Additionally, the frenetic activity that had taken place in order to prepare for the establishment of the “New-U” had left all parties with what was commonly referred to as “lengthy planning blight” (HEFCW, 2005a, p.12).

UL then set about re-establishing itself as a sole institution concerned with its own performance and progression. Pressed however, by WAGs continued agenda for re-configuration, collaboration and merger, UL formally entered into discussions with Hogwarts University on 17 December 2004 exactly one year after the termination of the merger proposals with the University of Poppleton. This announcement was “warmly welcomed by the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) which has been seeking to rationalise the large number of small institutions in Wales” (MacLeod, 2004, online).

Based on the strategic alliance created by both universities in May 2002 to promote both professional and vocational education throughout the South East Wales region, four options were considered by the two institutions:

1. To continue with the current status quo;
2. To consider strengthening the strategic alliance but not consider merger;
3. To consider strengthening the current strategic alliance with a view to merger in the long term;
4. To merge the two Universities.

UL’s Vice-Chancellor Professor Dumbledore added “By working together we will continue to improve the provision of higher education in south east Wales and meet the aims of the Welsh Assembly Government’s Reaching Higher strategy”
(MacLeod, 2004, online). Once again, staff from both institutions worked closely to consult on and assess the best option.

On 11 May HEFCW (2005a) published a *Review of Post-92 Higher Education in Wales*. The report, written by Professors John Bull and Sir Ron Cooke, offered a vision of how - working together and building upon existing strengths - the University of Poppleton, UL, and Hogwarts University could develop distinctive and ambitious teaching-led provision.

The application made by Hogwarts University and UL to merge was subsequently turned down on 22\textsuperscript{nd} July 2005 by HEFCW who made it clear that they wanted (as a condition of funding) to see the University of Poppleton included in the merger talks. The Education Minister, Jane Davidson told the BBC:

> **HEFCW’s independent report set out a compelling vision for higher education involving the three universities. As was recently stated by the First Minister, it is essential, therefore, for the sake of the institutions themselves, their staff, students, the people and economy of South Wales, that the three institutions in south east Wales plan their futures together……I urge the governing bodies, vice-chancellors and staff of the three universities to work with the HEFCW to move this project forward”**

(BBC News, 22 July 2005, online)

In response to the Education Minister’s statement, the three universities met again on 21 December 2006 to make clear their positions. They continue to talk.
In January 2004, UL instigated a development event for its senior management group to consider issues Leadership and Management issues in relation to the performance management agenda. Following a formal tender process, Roffey Park Institute (RPI) were engaged to facilitate this event which was designed to be the first in a series of senior management team events.

At the EMG/SMG away event at Gregynog in January 2004, members of EMG/SMG began to debate issues around Management, Governance and Leadership. The themes covered included: What makes a good Leader Manager? What skills knowledge and attributes do they have? What do you see them doing? How do they spend their time? What do they talk about? How do they talk? What are the differences and overlaps between Management and Leadership? What are the current barriers to Leadership and Management within UL – what are the issues? How can we strengthen Leadership and Management at UL?

In 2005, another development session for EMG/SMG was held at Lamphey Court to look at creating core values for the organisation, toolkits to assist managers in managing the key challenges for HE and identifying potential enablers and blockers. In 2006, the theme of the session at Cwrt Bleddyn focussed on identifying gaps in current academic and service provision and determining action plans to eliminate or minimise these. A brief summary of
some of the outcomes of the various senior management development events (2004, 2005 and 2006) follows. In addition, in Volume Two: Appendix 4, there are a number of what have been termed ‘ANECQUOTES’. These are a mixture of anecdotes and quotes which aim to encapsulate snapshots of managers' points of view, thoughts, observations, deliberations and health warnings:
Table 4.3: Gregynog 2004, the Super Amalgam Leader/Manager

**Leadership in UL – The Super Amalgam Leader/Manager**

- Is knowledgeable and knows what they are talking about;
- Is skilful in the way they offer suggestions;
- Good environmental scanning;
- Is a strategist;
- Innovated;
- Flexible;
- Has a dollop of common sense;
- Problem focused – problem solving, – decisiveness;
- People skills – caring, empathetic, sensitive, knowing what makes people tick, lightness of touch, approachable;
- Has a sense of value;
- Has a sense of vision;
- Leads by example;
- Good communicator, speaks with enthusiasm, balance of talking too and listening too and the way they do it, able to deliver difficult messages, give and receive feedback;
- Spends time with people (teams and peers) they are advocates talking about what you are trying to achieve in positive terms and at the same time, addressing negative influences in a positive way;
- Enthuse, encourage, inspire;
- Positive – pro-active;
- Tolerant of ‘mistakes’;
- Playing to the strengths of the team;
- ‘Right minded’ – a good sense of what is right and wrong;
- ‘Business’ focused; Clarity – objectives stated and understood, understands how to get things done;
- Having a sense of ‘UL’ Corporateness; Shows commitment – wants to join in;
- Doing things and taking people with you ‘Project UL’ (motivation);
- Takes responsibility and is accountable for actions; Empowering people to do – being responsive;
- Recognising short comings - their own and others - addressing shortfalls;
- Taking Risks (if well thought through) and making difficult decisions;
- Needs to be visible;
- Confident and enthusiastic;
- Fair in dealings – respect and trust for people;
- A realistic vision and ambition;
- Tactful and diplomatic;
- Passion to serve organisation (UL);
- Approachable – willing to listen to others;
- Focus on where UL/department/section is going;
- Looking to the future to move organisation (UL) forward;
- Having trust in your line management;
- Understanding of rationale behind decisions, rationalisation of big picture/little picture;
- Higher level thinking skills – why are we doing this;
- Aware of external and internal factors; Understanding high-level principles;
- Energetic, tolerant, calmness;
- Business focused; Good time management;
- Valuing diversity – dealing will all contributions – playing to the strengths of the team;
- Invests in research;
- Enthusiastic and enthuse lead pro-active by Leadership;
- Are productive, effective and efficient.
Table 4.4: Lamphey Court 2005, Culture and Values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE - UL ENABLERS:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Selling/Telling Corporate and Individual ‘wins’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard working staff building ‘champions’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing effectively with barriers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building ownership (structured) i.e. clear strategy and action planning, good support mechanisms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear objectives and clarity of purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting &quot;buy in&quot; from staff and “valuing teams”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong professional pride especially after completing successes. Celebrate more positively!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing a positive “buzz”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front-loaded planning (lots)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking Risk</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BUILDING ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The focus must be on:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building identify</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US – not “ME”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonding positively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selling &quot;key values&quot; which are simple and offer “buy in”</td>
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<tr>
<th>UL – OUR STAKEHOLDERS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government – QAA/Estyn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students – Parents - Sponsors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff – Governing Bodies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Bodies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employers/industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local community/Global community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partners (key) – collaborators - (Other HEIs, FEs, Schools)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UWIC MANAGEMENT VALUES:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Must link to the ‘Nolan principles’ of public life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selflessness – Public interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrity – Conflict ‘free’</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Table 4.5: Cwrt Bleddyn 2006, SWOT Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRENGTHS:</th>
<th>WEAKNESSES:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25% of staff = 3*</td>
<td>Age profile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15% of staff = 2*</td>
<td>Management not dealing with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25% of staff = 1*</td>
<td>underperformance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35% of staff = 0</td>
<td>Lack of well rounded academics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100% - rewards? pay framework?</td>
<td>Heavy reliance on small number of range</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPPORTUNITIES:</th>
<th>THREATS:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improve performance. management (leadership - gutsy)</td>
<td>Cost of change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff development – success stories. change presents opportunities</td>
<td>Replacement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reputation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strength of unions (opposing change)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Large numbers going in 5 years (could be an opportunity?)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.2.12 Leadership Foundation Project

At this point in juncture, the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education (LFHE) was inviting bids from HEIs to secure funding from its Small Development Project (SDP) fund. The overarching theme for proposals for projects was Leadership, Management and Governance (in their broadest sense), and their relevance and application to all staff. Recognising the enormity of the performance management agenda, and keen to make progress in this area, UL put forward a proposal entitled *Signalling Progress: Developing Performance Indicators*, which was fortunate enough to secure £15K of funding for a twelve month period. This funding assisted in buying a proportion of time from Staff Development and the Strategy Development Office in order to progress the performance management agenda through the project.
The aim of the LFHE Project was to devise a robust framework for the implementation of a performance management system for use in higher education and to develop and produce a ‘Performance Management Toolkit’ which would enable managers (academic and support) in the higher education sector to put in place appropriate performance management systems.

Having assessed a number of performance management models, the BSC was identified by the project team/steering group, and subsequently endorsed by the EMG/SMG as being the preferred performance management framework for UL. It appeared to offer a systematic methodology for directly linking top-level corporate strategy with the everyday tasks and activities of employees and is already successfully utilised, to varying degrees, in a number of public sector organisations, including the University of Edinburgh.

The project team (made up of five senior managers) determined that the most useful implementation of a BSC approach would be a hierarchical, two tiered approach, with scorecards being developed at two levels:

- The Corporate Balanced Scorecard
- The School/Unit Balanced Scorecard

The UL CSP (2005-09) outlines the overarching goals of the Institution. These headline goals are then extrapolated into 14 key strategic objectives which are currently presented under four headings: Learning and Teaching; Research; Third Mission; Supporting Environment.
Whilst this approach to reporting accurately reflects the ambition of the institution there is some evidence to suggest that staff are not engaged and thus, on the whole, remain unaware of the key objectives. The initial objective for the project team was to distill the 14 key objectives onto the balanced scorecard format; thus facilitating the further dissemination of corporate objectives to all staff.

In designing the UL Scorecard the project team was faced with the option of altering the four sections of which it is comprised, to match the four main headings of the CSP. After some consideration it was decided that this would be counter-productive as it maintains aspects of artificial segregation of activity. Thus the BSC format adopted by UL matches that outlined by Kaplan and Norton (Balanced Scorecard Institute, 2005) as detailed in chapter two, section 2.6.2.

The benefit of such an approach for UL, is that it begins to take greater account of activities which, (whilst central to the success of the institution), are not necessarily areas of financial strength, indeed, some will be areas that sometimes require funding from the financially strong areas to remain viable. The scorecard also offers a systematic methodology for demonstrating to all staff how their activity contributes to the overall aims, objectives and success of the institution.
The starting point for developing the corporate BSC was the revision of the existing CSP which was updated in July 2005 to ensure relevance and applicability to the BSC framework. Having accomplished this, the team then moved onto the task of populating the four BSC categories, with performance indicators derived from the key aims and objectives of UL’s CSP.

To generate a test BSC at the school/unit level, the HR management team was selected to map the corporate BSC against its HR strategy. The managers looked at each high-level PI, and then debated what, how and when the HR Department made a contribution to the achievement of that particular PI. One of the major benefits/outcomes of this exercise was that it highlighted and visualized areas of both direct and indirect HR contribution, for example, business support, employee relations, staff development, and health and safety. The use of the BSC also highlighted the importance of utilizing business systems to support the infrastructure of the organization and interestingly, although UL was currently making a significant investment in new technology, the existence of such systems were not referenced in the CSP. A toolkit was developed as a best practice guide for managers on managing performance. It provides 15 key steps, top tips and techniques and a self evaluation tool (O'Reilly and Burnett, 2005, http://www.lfhe.ac.uk/research/smallprojects/sdprojectreports.html.)
4.2.13 Research Degree Awarding Powers

UL defines research as: “Activity which represents original investigation undertaken in order to gain knowledge and understanding” (UL Research Strategy 2005 – 2008). Any research activity undertaken by staff should also lead to outputs which can be used as a measure of both the extent and quality of the research. Examples of outputs might include:

- publications of various types;
- generation of images, artefacts, designs and performances;
- successful acquisition of research grant income;
- active and successful supervision of research students;
- completion and submission of a PhD thesis;
- successful completion of contract research.

UL has an established record in applied research that has direct application in business, industry, the professions and the community at large. World renowned organisations such as Ford (UK), Coca Cola, Nestlé, Robert Bosch, Dowty Aerospace, the Food Standards Agency and the Welsh Rugby Football Union have all featured amongst UL’s portfolio of applied research and knowledge transfer partners.

Although TDAPs have been in place since 1993, UL chooses to hold them in abeyance, preferring instead, to award University of Wales degrees. In 2004 a strategic decision was taken by the Board of Governors to actively pursue its long held ambition to attain Research Degree Awarding Powers (RDAPS) and a task group was established to manage the application process. The
achievement of RDAPs is seen as a logical and natural extension of UL’s maturity and development as an HE institution:

RDAPs is considered to be both an important goal and a vehicle for driving change, but it is not regarded merely as an end in itself. The achievement of RDAPs will represent a significant step on a road which is expected to culminate in the achievement of full university status

(UL Application for RDAPs, 2007, internal document)

Consequently, UL’s CSP identifies three key areas for action:

1. To develop the research culture to:
   Secure Research Degree Awarding Powers
   Develop a small number of high profile research centres
   Increase the proportion of staff engaged in research

2. To improve research performance to:
   To increase the volume and quality of research outputs and volume of research funding, especially from cherished sources

3. To develop a strong Postgraduate Community to:
   Increase the number of research supervisors and the number of postgraduate research students
   Develop the postgraduate community

Which have led to the instigation of a number of initiatives and projects designed to take forward the agenda. These include:

- Development of an RDAPs Action Plan
- Publication of a Postgraduate Strategy and associated Action Plan
- Creation of a Research and Enterprise Services Unit
- Agreement on UWIC’s definitions of research and scholarship
- Initiation of a professorial recruitment process
A thorough review of academic regulations via Research Degrees Committee

- Publication of the Research Ladder Concept
- Initiation of a periodic review process
- Development of an institutional database of the advanced scholarship, research and enterprise activities of staff.

It was agreed with the QAA that the schedule for the upcoming RDAPs assessment should coincide with UL’s institutional review. The schedule was programmed as follows:

- Autumn 07 – Review of RDAPs submission following acceptance of prima facia case
- January 08 – Commence RDAPs scrutiny at UL – on going until May/June 08 depending on committee cycle etc
- June 08 – Completion of RDAPs scrutiny at UL

The final outcome of the RDAPs exercise was not known at the time of writing this thesis.

4.2.14 Academic Re-Structuring

The termination of merger discussions with the University of Poppleton necessitated a review of UL’s strategy. This process began in January 2004, with an EMG/SMG management development session in Gregynog, where the need to examine the organisational structure was overtly recognised by the group. Consequently, during spring 2004, Academic Board and its sub-committees engaged in a process of identifying UL’s academic priorities. The
priorities approved by Academic Board included the recognition that UL may need to adapt its structures so that they better support the achievement of strategic objectives. Implicit within that priority was an assumption that the current structures were sub-optimal.

The opportunity was taken to review UL’s structural and management arrangements with a view to making changes that would better facilitate UL in achieving its strategic objectives, and better place the institution to respond to expected changes in Welsh and UK HE policy. UL’s academic structures were analysed and consulted on in a variety of fora over a period of time. EMG concluded that when viewed collectively, issues identified in the analysis and consultation created a prima facie case to change the organisational structure in order to realise the following benefits:

- Facilitate interdisciplinary working, thereby making better use of UL’s academic disciplines and expertise.
- Reduce barriers to planning and implementing change.
- Enhance the flexibility of academic delivery units through improved economies of scale.
- Provide for enhanced management expertise and academic leadership.

The schools were re-organised from nine schools to five schools and the re-structuring took effect in August 2006.
4.3 MAPPING PERFORMANCE

The continuing WAG agenda of re-configuration, collaboration and merger has resulted in two sets of merger talks, requiring the re-deployment of resources away from the main performance management agenda at UL. Nevertheless much has been achieved and the case study has provided a useful way of charting and reflecting on those achievements. It is not clear whether these interventions have had an accumulative effect, although it would be reasonable to think that the sum total of all the interventions over the period is probably more powerful than their individual effect.

The performance agenda at UL will doubtless, continue to mature. The implementation timeline (Table 4.2) illustrates an exercise not dissimilar to plate spinning – getting one up and spinning at a time. The skill of course, is to make sure they all remain spinning fast enough to stay up.

Following a review of the literature on performance management (detailed in chapter two), a unified theoretical model of performance management was developed which aimed to bring together some of the key components of the performance models and management thinking detailed throughout the review. This case study presents an opportunity to map UL’s performance against the unified theoretical model as a way of concluding how successful (or otherwise) the performance interventions over the last eight years have been. This analysis is detailed in Chapter Eight.
Chapter Five

Performance Management: A View From The Top

Analysis of Interviews with UL’s Executive Management Group.

April 2009
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5.1 INTRODUCTION
As stated in the methodology chapter, one-to-one interviews took place with 21 senior managers in UL. This comprised four managers at levels one and two and 17 managers at level three. This chapter will present and analyse the discussions from the level one and two managers who make up UL’s EMG.

The identity of the four EMG managers has been disguised by referring to them as: EMG1; EMG2; EMG3 and EMG4.

5.2 UNDERSTANDING THE TERM PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT
Respondents were asked for their opinions on what constitutes performance, and how they would describe it in relation to their role. Responses were varied and the top team discussed performance at both macro and micro level. At macro level, one member thought it was:

...very much about the performance of the organisation isn’t it? I’m constantly aware of the indicators and benchmarks that the institution has to perform to and how they are met, and for me it’s very much about moving us towards excellence and imbuing quality enhancement which is very, very important. Building on our strengths and sensitively dealing with our weaknesses – not going in there and laying the law down and thrashing people, but being aware of where the weak areas are and determining how to bring them forward and disseminate best practice。(EMG2)

For EMG4, the connection between the higher level KPIs and how those were translated down throughout the organisation was important, so for example:
maybe say that over the next five years we want 50 KTPs in place. That then needs to be thought through in terms of what part of the organisation can deliver, so that then becomes about setting targets for that part of the organisation, but setting targets that are owned and understood, and setting targets in such a way that if there are resource implications for the individuals that are having to deliver, those resource implications are discussed and agreed and put in place (EMG4)

EMG3 also spoke about targets and objectives, and particularly those set for individuals as part of an appraisal. EMG3 recognised the importance of evaluating performance against the objectives in terms of their benefit to the organisation as well as the individual. EMG1 took a more ‘bottom-up’ view of what performance meant in practical terms:

….when we report through committees and boards it’s very important to me that people meet their deadlines about giving me draft papers, because if they don’t, then I go to board ill-prepared and the board then assesses my performance as being poor yeah? So I’m fundamentally dependant here, because most of the reports and papers that go to committee are usually drafted by someone else – so if I’m constantly chasing papers at the last minute then I would think about that seriously because that lets me down – and then I go to committee and find spelling errors in it, or I haven’t thought about it or I haven’t been fully briefed about the issues and all in front of a very public audience of the board. It makes me look silly, and it makes the EMG look silly, so it lets me down and it lets the Vice-Chancellor down. (EMG1)

EMG1 then went on to describe budgets as very public measures of either good or poor performance as well as “organisational disjunctures” (EMG1) as indicators of performance, leading sections to:

…‘blame off’ on other sections for things having gone wrong. You know, and not assuming responsibility for sorting things out but just sitting and ‘blaming off’ and pointing the finger. I mean that’s a very bad indicator – or a very good indicator of bad performance. Just things not being ‘ship shape or Bristol fashion’, you know, things that are old and out of date on the websites, critical documents not being kept up to date, critical documents not being written in plain English for people, or written in Welsh – a whole host of things that give a bad image and show that people have
been less than diligent in their work – for example someone gives me a set of numbers and when I add them up, they don’t add up to the total given at the bottom – it’s just stuff like that that appears shoddy yeah? Things that are not checked, things that are not presented well, those sorts of things and actually people don’t like being picked up on those sorts of things because they seem quite nit-picking really, but if people don’t pay attention to detail at that level, then that sort of detail gets wider and wider and wider and it becomes a very bad problem to deal with.(EMG1)

Two macro and two micro interpretations of ‘performance’ emerged from the top team, covering a range of issues:

- the performance of the organisation against indicators and benchmarks;
- the achievement of academic and research priorities through the translation of organisational objectives into individual objectives;
- the setting of objectives which benefit both the organisation as well as the individual; and
- a host of practical examples which demonstrate under performance such as overspent budgets, missed deadlines, things that were out of date, not well presented or simply shoddy.

Collectively, these views mirror Armstrong and Baron’s (1998) multi-layered view of performance when they talk about performance management as being a strategic issue concerned with some of the wider matters affecting the organisation and its longer-term goals and direction (EMG4 and EMG2); the integration of individual and team objectives with organisational strategies and plans (EMG3) and the capabilities of individuals and teams (EMG1).

However, the top team were all silent about the role of people development in performance management and continuous improvement. The holistic, complex
and multi-disciplinary nature of performance management, as described by the Cranfield School of Management (2007), did not come across in their individual responses.

5.3 MEASURING AND MANAGING PERFORMANCE AT SCHOOL/UNIT LEVEL

The four members of EMG were asked how they measured and managed performance at school/unit level as part of their portfolio of responsibility. EMG stated that he/she measured and managed performance by having “lots of contact,” particularly, through the utilisation of fortnightly team meetings and weekly one-to-one meetings, during which progress against objectives was discussed. EMG3 was also clear that it was not just about measuring performance, but also about trying to value the person, as well as what they do - “it’s important that we praise staff more than being negative towards them.”

EMG4 talked about the progress that had been made at UL over the last five years with regard to target setting, which previously, had been carried out in isolation and not agreed with those who were responsible for delivering against them. Consequently, “we kept missing those targets. Now we’re getting better, but we’re still not there, but we’re better”! Nowadays, the process of target setting is more refined and is centred around a research strategy:

So we’ll have the strategic plan as it were, the vision, the objectives and we’ll break that down into a series of targets and look at how those can be delivered. So for me, that is the kind of bread and butter and the important thing is kind of owning those targets so that if you have a strategic plan, like for learning and teaching, it’s owned through those boards and through the school channels (EMG4).
EMG4 stressed the importance of engaging maximum numbers of staff in the target setting process and putting in place appropriate rewards systems, for example, the recently introduced UL Research Initiative, designed to incentivise staff to participate in research activity by releasing some of their time:

I don’t believe you can ever meet performance and targets unless you have engaged, committed and happy staff and you could say that’s probably a bit sort of cloud cuckoo land but you can at least strive for that (EMG4).

However, EMG2 was not confident that his/her arrangements for measuring and managing performance at school/unit level were fully developed:

…not as well as I should! … I don’t really have a clear framework for doing so and I think that has been identified as an issue. In a sense, there are a range of performance indicators that we could take and we’ve started to talk about that. If you were looking at what the success factors within schools would be, certainly you’d be looking at recruitment of students to target – core business – are you getting the students in? and making sure you are not loosing them (EMG2).

And EMG1 talked about the difficulty of measuring and managing performance across a wide and somewhat non-coherent portfolio. Not only was there a limited amount of time to devote to each section, but because of the diversity of the business, his/her managers team briefings became “sort of semi meaningless almost.” EMG1 stated that he/she tried to give the managers:

……a strong sense of strategic direction and priorities i.e. a framework within which they can actually perform. I mean sometimes it might be a bit testing the one I give them, i.e. we’ve got to do X, Y and Z and we’ve all got to be doing it by Christmas sort of thing, and I expect some sort of dialogue about that within that framework and if we agree it – and I do give people an awful lot of rope to hang themselves with if you like. I mean I don’t really want to be right on top of it and have my hands on every single issue – I kind of expect people to co-operate and work with each other and have dialogue to get resolutions to issues (EMG1).
The Cranfield School of Management (2007, p.5) assert that:

*performance measurement includes the development of strategies or objectives, and the taking of actions to improve performance based on the insight provided by the performance measures.*

In keeping with this view several members of the top team recognised the important connection between strategy and performance objectives, although no reference was made to the formulation of SMART objectives as a means of translating strategy into practice (HM Treasury, 2001). Action to improve performance, based on the insight provided by performance measures, was not mentioned, although EMG2 alluded to the underdeveloped nature of performance measurement frameworks in HE – a view shared by the CUC (2006).

**5.4 BENCHMARKING**

Respondents were asked what they measured (benchmarked) performance against and how they determined whether their performance was good. EMG3 was of the opinion that benchmarking was a difficult exercise because the measurements used were rarely “like for like”. For example, Welsh Language Schemes, required by law throughout Wales, were different in each institution and particularly so, where the university was bilingual. EMG3 also pointed out that even though some university benchmarks such as recruitment and retention rates, or number of students accessing the library facilities, could be readily utilised, there were so many variables affecting the measures, that benchmarking was sometimes not valid or feasible.
EMG2 had started to research the feasibility of UL adopting some of the benchmark indicators currently used in Australian universities. In the meantime, he/she used other sources of information to keep abreast of performance issues:

Obviously, the other thing I do, is to keep an eye on the quality of provision either from external assessment such as Estyn or QAA. And I read all the external examiners reports so that I'm keeping an eye on it, and if I identify any issues then I will call in a Head of School and the Director of Learning and Teaching to talk to them about it and construct an action plan with them... (EMG2)

For EMG4 the process of benchmarking and measuring outcomes was critical – “I mean how can you set targets without being knowledgeable and intelligent about what’s happening locally, regionally, nationally, internationally? – you can’t” (EMG4). EMG4 used other universities across the UK as a benchmark for Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs), picking out the top five percent, looking at their performance and setting targets for UL to emulate. This process of constant benchmarking, target setting and measuring of outcomes has enabled UL to become top in Wales:

So yes, we are constantly looking at benchmarking and we did the same with the RAE and that kind of influenced the strategic thinking at the last RAE, where we went from entering eight or nine units for assessment with 40% of staff, to four units for assessment with 25% of staff, and that has sort of moved us up 20 places in the league table in RAE terms and in monetary terms its moved us from just under half a million to £1.2 million – so that’s a case of benchmarking which has a real sort of impact (EMG4).

Where PIs have been used to benchmark at UL, some tangible benefits can be seen (i.e. performance improvements in KTPs and the RAE). The HM Treasury (2001, p.23) recommend that Monitoring – comparing performance over time or
with other organisations – should be a key component of any successful performance measurement system.

Most institutions reported that they made some use of PIs, mainly to compare themselves with similar organisations (HEFCE, 2007). A smaller number also use them for more specific purposes such as widening access, marketing or strategic planning.

5.5 MEASURING AND MANAGING INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE

The respondents were asked how they measure and manage performance at individual level. EMG2 felt that it was important to monitor performance regularly, rather than to regard it as a once a year activity. However, EMG2 reported that “it’s quite difficult to say ‘You’re not doing this very well’, ‘I asked you for this three weeks ago where is it?’ or “Why have you under recruited – I want an action plan””, in the absence of any explicit performance management framework. EMG2 suggested that it would be a useful exercise to make more explicit the criteria against which performance would be measured, for example, HR issues - how many grievances? Financial management – have they come in on budget? Staffing issues – are they managing their staff effectively?

so that if you’ve got a new Head of School say, in the new structure, you could say at the end of the year we will assess you against evidence. I mean we can collect student complaints and collate external reports – there is real evidence around that would underpin this framework. I do carry out one-to-ones with the Heads of School on a twice termly basis and that’s an opportunity to address some of those issues and I also have to make them aware if the governing body is not satisfied with their performance, but I don’t know how comfortable I would actually feel about having a file of evidence to deal with under performance! (EMG2)
EMG3 managed individual performance through “Team meetings, one-to-one meetings, regularly revisit the staff review and development objectives and documentation at least on a termly basis – lots of contact” (EMG3). But for EMG4, whilst individual performance was managed, there was more emphasis placed on team performance:

I’m very much a team player – of course you can talk about individuals, but for me I always sort of think about my team and how best to get the most out of the team and how best to get individual team members challenged and motivated (EMG4).

EMG4 utilised a cascade approach whereby a whole section meeting was held on a monthly basis to discuss “aspects of the overall strategy” and performance in terms of research, commercial design, health and safety etc. Following on from this, EMG4 would talk to individuals about their performance within that context. However, what EMG4 found particularly effective was:

the kind of sharing of those kinds of individuals targets so that if there are problems, then those problems are kind of shared and understood by others and there might be opportunities for other individuals in the team to say well actually, have you thought about doing it this way? (EMG4)

EMG2 talked about the difficulties of managing performance in the absence of a performance management framework. The Audit Commission (2006, p.26) specifically recommend that “organisations have their own bespoke performance frameworks which are tailored to the focus and goals of the organisation” (Breakthrough six: find your own framework).

Torrington et al. (2002) recommend that employee performance can be managed informally as part of every day management activities following a simple three step approach involving Planning performance, Supporting
performance and Reviewing performance (similar to the IiP principles of Plan, Do and Review). There is some evidence that the top team are applying these principles. EMG4 talks about overall strategy, objectives and targets as part of the planning of performance although it is unclear as to whether training and development has been considered as part of the planning process. EMG4 also takes on an enabling role and encourages staff to talk through issues and solutions through a process of sharing individual targets, although there is no specific mention of coaching and mentoring as a means of supporting performance. In terms of reviewing performance, EMG4 holds regular team sessions to review performance against objectives, although it is not clear if these sessions are used as an opportunity to reward performance.

EMG3 talks about having lots of contact through one-to-one meetings and revisiting the staff review and development objectives, but it is not possible to discern the extent to which the processes of planning, supporting and reviewing are followed. Both the Torrington et al. (2002) and The Audit Commission, (2006) approaches provide sound and logical advice which if followed, should assist managers in managing performance effectively.

5.6 MANAGING UNDERPERFORMANCE

Top managers were asked to explain how they managed under-performance. Two of the top team were acutely aware of the importance of identifying under-performance and particularly, the necessity of dealing with it:

"I would deal with it on a one to one basis with HR - and we’ve done it....I’m as hard nosed about under performance as anyone else and I kind of manage that – I can’t afford not to. I mean I’m
expected to generate certain levels of income so if there is under performance…” (EMG4);

“I’d go down the disciplinary route, I wouldn’t hesitate” (EMG1).

However, EMG3, whilst acknowledging that “you have to address it at the end of the day,” also went on to say that:

what happens in organisations like this, in education very often, is that things or people are often sidelined or pushed sideways and the issues aren’t really addressed. I’m not saying whether that’s a good or bad thing because you know you are dealing with people’s lives and their futures…. (EMG3)

When issues of under-performance were dealt with, a number of mechanisms were used by EMG ranging from ‘monitoring the situation more closely’, ‘writing to individuals’, ‘calling them in and having a dialogue with them’ and ‘setting two weekly performance objectives’. EMG2 described a more unusual technique:

The other way to deal with it, at the Heads of Schools meeting this week, I asked each of them to go through their figures in front of the others and one of them actually said “Why are you doing this, you’ve had a detailed action plan from me?” and I said well I’m doing it because we want to disseminate best practice – what is working, the places it is working and why it is working – its no good saying School of Education and School of Health and Social Sciences have done OK so they need not take part in the discussion – why have they done OK?

EMG4 talked about being “hands-on” and approachable as a methodology for preventing under-performance in the first place:

I guess because I’m very much kind of hands on – or try to be, you know….so I can kind of scan the landscape and see under performance very quickly because we’re transparent….the times I’ve had to deal with under performance have not been too many and I would like to think that’s not a co-incidence, so you know, I am very much in touch and I am very approachable (EMG4).
All members of EMG were in agreement that tackling issues of under-performance was quite difficult for a number of reasons. Examples were given by EMG3 and EMG1 of where they have had to deal with people who had lost their self-worth or self-confidence in their ability to manage “the great mass of things that are landed on them every day of the week”. EMG1 went on to say that “often there’s a trail of organisational history and culture impacting on the situation and I can even have the view where I think its actually not their fault”. EMG2 gave an example of where he/she had had to have a difficult discussion about someone’s professional behaviour, language and the public image of their school.

The Audit Commission (2000) point out that this reluctance to tackle issues of under performance can be due to a number of reasons including: a fear of potential conflict, embarrassment, negative feelings, the fear of destroying a previously good working relationship and the potential for accusations of bullying or racial/sexual harassment, particularly where the relationship between the manager and employee is poor to begin with.

EMG1 and EMG2 were critical of some of the UL management processes that were available for managing under performance:

*I don’t think our Staff Review and Development Scheme focuses on under performance – it focuses on the positives, the opportunities and on the achievements which is good and fine and that motivates some people very well and moves them forward, but I think we need to look at a mechanism for getting at those under performance issues more explicitly* (EMG2).

*I’m not a great fan of the capability procedure – I’ve used it in my previous employment and it’s too fraught with ‘you didn’t give me enough development or you didn’t support me properly at the right
time’ - its too capable of saying its someone else’s fault! People can wriggle out of it because organisations are very imperfect…..so I do think the capability procedure is very difficult unless you’ve got something that is glaringly obvious like somebody burning the chips in the kitchen every single day of the week – but with a lot of work that we do which is administration and management its much more difficult unless somebody makes an obvious mistake - I mean you and I know about one where somebody made a very, very obvious mistake which cost the organisation a lot of money (EMG1).

Armstrong and Ward (2005) found that managers often expected that the appraisal system would single-handedly solve all performance issues and yet their research showed that the main skill gap identified, was the lack of ability to have those ‘awkward’ conversations with under-performers in the first place, because of an inability to deliver constructive feedback.

Half of the top team were comfortable in dealing with issues of under-performance whilst the other half seemed more reticent to do so. The propensity to tackle issues of poor performance is highlighted by HRM Guide (2008) who found that staff thought their managers to be less than effective in this area. A survey conducted by IiP UK (2005) found that 39 per cent of managers complain that it is employees who are not pulling their weight; and 40 per cent of employees say their manager is turning a blind eye and not taking any action to address poor performance.

5.7 RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Top managers were asked how they ensured they recruited the best candidates rather than the second best. EMG1 reported that he/she had rarely been
involved in recruitment panels since coming to UL and had inherited all the managers he/she managed. From previous experience, EMG1 felt that it was important to get the overall job and person specification right and to assess people against that specification both fairly and honestly. EMG1 alluded to the power of interview panels in terms of the judgements they were able to make.

EMG2 and EMG4 also concurred that careful consideration should be given to the criteria in the JDs and PSs and that it was essential to have:

\[
\text{a crystal clear understanding of what you are expecting an individual to do and deliver – what are the deliverables – and then from those deliverables, working back to the kinds of experience and skills sets the individual needs and being absolutely sort of ruthless. If there’s uncertainty or sort of ‘greyness’ in that individuals ability to deliver against the requirement, then reject (EMG4).}
\]

EMG3 on the other hand was concerned about the wider reputation of UL in relation to being able to attract high quality academic staff… “you must get the best candidate that you can, but you have to realise at the end of the day that the fellow that you attract has a perception of the organisation”. EMG3 was confident that support staff would want to come to UL since they do not have any preconceptions about the organisation, whereas for academic staff, they would be more concerned with enhancing their own professional status and would look at how the university can either help or hinder them in this process “….in the academic world I think very clearly that we are curtailed by our academic reputation…. in terms of certain academic areas – not all”. EMG3 also talked about the importance of having appropriate HR recruitment systems and processes in place “to enable people like myself and others to evaluate the
applications, …you have to have criteria… it isn't simply letting people get on with it” (EMG3).

EMG2 was concerned about attracting candidates with the right skills sets and wondered whether UL’s ability to recruit was sometimes hampered by the timing of the advertisement (for example, sometimes placed during the summer when most academics are on annual leave). He/she further talked of the advantage of being able to incorporate other models of recruitment such as secondments, “to think outside of the box, so if you know that there is somebody who might have the skills that you want but that they wouldn’t be interested in this, that or the other, then you’ve got to think flexibly haven’t you? - and get their skills in a flexible way” (EMG2).

5.7.1 Recruitment and Selection Improvements

Respondents from the top management team were asked for their opinions on which aspects of the recruitment process should be improved and how:
Well definitely, I mean I really, really dislike this procedure that we have in UL of not having interviews and presentations (at Professor and Readership Committee). I mean to me it just goes against the grain of anything I understand about recruitment. I have found that difficult that some people just submit a CV and some people just look around the table and see if they like the CV or not. I just don't like that at all really. (EMG 1)

I think – and this is going to seem very strange – there is the informal and formal bit. ... but I would perhaps want a greater emphasis on the informal bit – its very difficult because its all false – people will be at their best because they want the job but informal processes are inclined to other measures, you know, how people are regarded…but you’ve got to be careful as well. There is no perfect recruitment process. People would argue that the interview process – however that is defined – is also imperfect but the best of a bad bunch...I don’t think a straight interview does it to be quite honest, as a process of being fair and open and everything else. I mean we do have presentations, but going around getting other peoples impressions of people is very important and that can be done in different ways.....( EMG 3)

I think in my field I would like to constitute some processes like presentations throughout the organisation. I mean in Teaching and Learning that’s very important. I don’t know if that’s the case but you end up sometimes with people who perhaps on paper and in a formal interview situation can excel but they can not actually do the job you are asking them to do, so I think its quite useful to have their presentation style tested. (EMG 2)

Clearly we have our personnel systems and processes in place, and we have our job descriptions and person specifications in place and that’s excellent. But I do wonder how we are sort of cross-referencing to the wider UL picture – its almost like case law, something has been done for a period of time this way and so a job comes up, that’s the job description. And I’ve seen cases where – (and I’m sure you have) – where individuals have been put into positions which are not really appropriate. They might be incredibly able individuals, but actually when you look at their sort of skills sets, their kind of experience, their qualifications, there is actually a mis-match to what we are requiring. They’ve been taken on because they are excellent kind of individuals, sound individuals, but actually they don’t fit in the role – but I think that whole kind of process……but how you do that, I don’t know because that’s almost a cultural shift and at the end of the day its got to be down to the individual school or unit. And I think that its either due to a lack of experience or perhaps not fully understanding that sort of precise evaluation at the front end. And I’m not sure how you do it – I know how I do it, but I’m not sure how transferable that is without an awful lot of management development, and that is critical. I think this whole issue of recruitment and retention and development is up to the organisation, because we can have our academic aspirations or we can have our financial aspirations, but unless you’ve got individuals at all levels who can achieve that – and are signed up to that and kind of own that, and own that kind of “corporate thinking”…..and that’s the other thing, corporate thinking and corporate ownership,( EMG 4)

Figure 5.1: Recruitment and Selection Improvements
The overall responses from EMG did not indicate that the recruitment and selection process was seen by the top team as a critical component of organisational performance and there was no reference to UL’s HR strategy in the process.

Three members of the top team talked about the importance of spending time getting the job description, person specification and criteria right. This view complements that of Beardwell and Wright (2004), who in addition, also suggest that organisations examine alternative options to recruitment, such as redeployment of existing staff, or restructuring departments or workloads.

Mention was made by the top team of interview panels; the reputation of the university; the timings of recruitment campaigns and the necessity of having an HR system in place. Improvements that the top team wanted to see in the recruitment and selection process included:

- The abolition of ‘paper’ based recruitment and selection processes (as in the applications for Professorship and Readership) (EMG1);
- The freedom to be able to gather other people’s impressions of candidates as part of a wider selection process (EMG3);
- The introduction of presentations across the organisation for positions relating to teaching and learning (EMG2);
- The establishment of a stronger ‘corporate’ link between organisational and academic aspirations and the better matching of skilled individuals to those requirements through the recruitment and selection process (EMG4).

HEFCE (2002, p.4), states that “The world class reputation of UK higher education depends on its ability to recruit and retain high quality staff” and the CIPD (2007) assert that “having the right person, in the right place, at the right time, is crucial to organisational performance”. It is possible that EMG4 is
alluding to the need to take a more holistic and corporate view of the recruitment and selection process given its vital role.

The top team did not talk about any of the following significant components of recruitment and selection issues:

- The legal framework of employment law, including the requirement for robust job evaluation processes to protect against potential claims of equal pay for work of equal value;
- The potential costs of getting the recruitment process wrong, both in terms of discrimination claims or appointing someone who is unable to perform satisfactorily;
- The training and development of managers to ensure they have the appropriate skills and knowledge.

It is unlikely that senior managers would not be aware of these issues, but more likely, that they are not seen as significant. There is a sense that recruitment and selection is viewed as an administrative house keeping exercise rather than as a complex and strategic tool for recruiting and retaining high quality staff.

5.8 INDUCTION

The top management team was asked to describe the induction processes currently in place to ensure that new members of staff are fully aware of expectations in terms of performance. Induction, was taken seriously by all top managers, and there was an acknowledgement that they were responsible for not only the induction of the managers within their direct line, but also for
ensuring that induction processes were in place further down the line, within their portfolio of responsibility “so I mean, I help Colin to make sure that that person has got an induction programme in place, and you know, they get a chance to go to committees and that they meet the right people, etc” (EMG1).

EMG2 and EMG4 were both confident that their areas of responsibility had robust induction processes in place:

one of the senior managers will spend a whole day introducing them to other members of staff, kind of walking them round. We spend an awful lot of time…we’ll take them through the kind of philosophy and objectives of PDR, where its kind of positioned, who its stakeholders are, where it sits kind of locally, regionally, nationally, internationally, where its priorities are…… and we’ll also go through what that individual is expecting to do and what that is likely to involve and then we’ll kind of work with that individual fairly closely – you know on a kind of daily basis in the early stages, and then onto a weekly basis and then a monthly basis until that individual feels absolutely confident and comfortable with what’s required. And then there’s a kind of “open door” for that individual if they want to come up to us, and then at the end of a three or four month period we see how that individual is getting on (EMG4).

EMG1 described how he/she had invested time in the latest new member of staff by:

talking about the work, talking about the committee servicing, talking about how the different committees work, what the conventions were – in that case it was also about the politics of committees and why some committees were more politically sensitive than others and the need for confidentiality and what we were trying to do to develop the service….. and I think that that probably worked quite well – except that she then left! (EMG1).

EMG2 also talked about the importance of making sure that the students were inducted according to the Charter Mark manual. This had prompted him/her to write to remind those responsible in the schools of the necessity to follow the
manual - “a little bit of ‘policing’ to make sure people are properly inducted” (EMG2).

Mentoring was also considered to be an important part of the induction process by EMG2 and EMG3 “Mentorship is critical I think and not only in terms of the academic but also on the counselling side, the pastoral side where they need somebody …so mentorship is a requirement not a – what’s the word I’m looking for? - an add on” (EMG3).

EMG2 also talked about the induction of different groups of staff:

I spent virtually a whole day down at Doric Avenue Campus inducting the new Directors of Learning and Teaching into their role and that was quite structured in the sense of talking through what the objectives were and the operational plan and strategic plan and so I think fairly good induction procedures at a local level – and he (Viktor) does make sure that we comply with all of these things!…(EMG2).

5.8.1 Induction Improvements

Respondents were invited to make suggestions as to whether parts of the induction process should be improved and if so, how.
Certainly from my perspective I think we need an induction programme for programme directors. I mean I dealt with one yesterday where a new course director had done things – he’d changed the programme – I mean he’d actually moved to a new credit framework all at sort of course committee level and I had to kind of tactfully say, look you know you’re not allowed to do that! And you know, he’d already told students…and you can’t lay into him hard because you think well, - and it’s the schools to a certain extent that should be inducting their new course directors – but I don’t think they are. And then I had an example in the summer of a course director who had applied extra regulations which could have caused UL a major problem, so I think course directors or programme directors induction is probably one of the key areas. (EMG 2)

I would formalise the mentoring process without question. I would also realise that the mentoring processes vary across the piste inevitably and that mentorships would have to be different for academic and support staff – perhaps, I don’t know, mentorship periods would have to be different lengths, but mentorship is not simply about doing the job as it were its about counselling, its about pastoral support. (EMG 3)

I am in favour of having a face to face induction programme. I mean there is a place for E-Learning in the staff development sphere and it may well be that within induction there is some role for E-Learning, but I am in favour of the face-to-face thing and what ever it is, I think it matters less what they get on it than the fact that they get it – you know, that they think they are being treated as important, that they meet people, that they are told things and given information and it is an expectation of staff when they are new to an organisation that they will have some kind of formal corporate level induction and that it will focus on such things as how the organisation is structured, how you find your way through it, who you go to, what the basics of health safety and emergency are, yeah?....There have to be some faces there for them to see. And it has to be away from the office so that they feel special – it’s a bit like getting baptised – they’ve got to have done it because you know, the worst thing people can say is well you know I went there and they didn’t even give me an induction programme – you know? I was just thrown right in you know? (EMG 1)
Top managers discussed the topics that they covered in their induction programmes including the work role, political sensitivities, operational and strategic plans, stakeholders, the position of the school or unit locally, regionally, nationally, internationally and so forth. When asked if there were any parts of the induction process they thought should be improved, three top managers suggested the following:

- A specific induction programme for programme directors to ensure that they fully understood their role, level of authority and academic procedures;
- The formalisation of a UL mentoring process across the organisation to assist in supporting new staff during their induction;
- The re-introduction of a face-to-face corporate induction programme for new staff to.

Although induction is recognised as a complex task, the CIPD (2006) advocate that all organisations should take a more holistic view and have in place a well thought-out and planned induction programme. It is not clear from the top team responses whether induction is recognised as part of the wider performance management agenda, or indeed as the beginning of a planned retention strategy (Corbridge and Pilbeam, 1998).

Whilst it is evident that some aspects of induction do take place, there is no reference by the top team to key parts of induction such as:

- The identification of training needs including essential health and safety training; setting performance expectations including performance management and reviews;
- Standards and rules such as corporate standards of behaviour, use of e-mail, time keeping;
• Terms and conditions of employment such as absence reporting, expenses, hours of work, pensions, probationary period;
• Employee relations for example trade union membership, consultation, discipline and grievance procedures;
• Personal documentation and checks such as Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks, security card and number, payment of salary details, e-mail account, issue of useful background information (Rankin, 2004).

Although EMG take induction seriously, there is a sense that induction is not fully understood as a complex and strategic tool for retaining high quality staff and ensuring they reach optimum levels of performance sooner rather than later. Although there is an expectation from EMG members, that SMG members should take the lead in these areas – “and it’s the schools to a certain extent that should be inducting their new course directors – but I don’t think they are” (EMG 2) the monitoring systems appear to be insufficient. The potential implications are that if EMG are not regarding HR processes (such as induction) as their overall responsibility, or not making clear their expectations to SMG members, then there is a danger that induction will be either ignored or diluted.

There was no evidence to suggest that the top team evaluate the effectiveness of the induction processes undertaken within their portfolios of responsibility, for example % of staff leaving within the first six months (CIPD, 2007).
5.9 PROBATION

Members of EMG were asked how they ensured that staff meet their probationary requirements. EMG3 and EMG2 were both candid about their current probationary arrangements, talking about their level of involvement as follows:

Well I don’t, to be perfectly honest…..what we do have is the forms that we have from HR and I think I filled one in on young Madame Maxime – well, I don’t know whether I have! – but yeah, I’m aware that we do have procedures and I am reminded by HR that I have to fill in a form and I presume a probationary review here, but I can’t say I’m particularly au fait with it…(EMG3).

Well I’m not that involved, but certainly with Heads of Schools we want them to tighten that all up and link it with the HE Academy requirements is the answer. I’m aware that that’s loose – very loose. But I think with teaching staff it’s got to be linked to this framework we’re talking about and with mentoring and teaching and learning experience, because we’ve got staff – I mean I was dealing with a personnel case last summer with someone whose been teaching in UL for ten years where the school has to give him work where he can’t do damage – that’s frightening. That person’s never been told - or not never been told, never been exposed to a discussion about the evidence – so I think we do need to tighten up on that, we definitely do (EMG2).

EMG1 had not had any staff on probation since starting with UL, although had made a recommendation to confirm an individual into post on behalf of another top manager. EMG4 on the other hand, stated that they did use the formal probation process:

Like last year we recruited a couple of individuals to promote KTPs and even now, I will kind of go and sit with them to make sure they are OK and work closely with them. So even after that sort of induction process, ensuring they’ve kind of understood the marketing needs, the proposal writing requirements – and they’ll still sort of bounce things off us. I mean induction is over a long period – it’s a long kind of process.
EMG3 felt that the probationary period should be a two way process “It should really be as to whether they are fitted for the job and in a sense whether the organisation suits them. In both things. Why not?” (EMG3).

5.9.1 Probation Improvements

Top managers were asked for suggestions in relation to improving the probationary process. Their responses are detailed in Figure 5.3 below.

![Figure 5.3: Probation Period Improvements](image)

I’m in favour of extending the probationary period. I mean one of my first university jobs was on a 3 year probationary period and that was where you had a mentor – you were assigned a mentor to work kind of along side you. And that would be something very good if we could introduce it – whether you could find the individuals who are interested and of sufficient calibre will remain to be seen!! But I think it is about that personal contact at the end of the day and its about making individuals feel that they do have that kind of route through, if they are slightly….its always difficult settling into a new organisation. I mean for some it just sort of happens, but its down to personality and for others it’s a little more difficult and I do worry that we loose sort of able individuals along the way who are not maybe confident in going and talking to someone if they need to. I know that we have to work within the realms of reality and practicality but I think we could do a lot more. (EMG 4)

I think what people put in place for induction must be seen as part of probation, so it must be part of probation that you’ve been on a corporate induction, it must be part of probation that your line manager has given you a probationary schedule with some things that you’ve got to have achieved you know within six months, yeah? And it may be very simple you know, stuff you’ve got to have done in the first year – that you’ve got to have made contact with all the senior managers or something like that, ummm, that you’ve got to have become familiar with UL’s this, that and the other, that you must have read the strategic plan or whatever it is that you want to say to somebody that they must have done in order to be reasonably competent in their job yeah? So for me induction and probation must be tied together and it must be formal i.e. there must be a form signed off to show that this person started work today, this is their induction schedule. The review will be at the end of one month, at the end of three months and the confirmation at the end of six months. (EMG 1).

How would you improve it? I suppose understanding the administrative processes and procedures and how that is done – I mean there is not always clarity around forms and protocols and so forth. (EMG 2)
The top team made no reference to the association between the contract of employment and probation as recommended by ACAS (2008). There is a danger that probation is seen by EMG as a bureaucratic process that managers are required to undertake, rather than as a mechanism for developing performance and, where appropriate, for tackling any performance issues in the very early stages.

ACAS (2008) recommend that reviews of performance should be carried out at regular intervals and that records of progress during the probationary period should be kept. Although EMG3 was not “particularly au fait” with the probationary process, he/she filled out the forms when reminded by HR. This suggests a reactive rather than pro-active approach to the probation process, and raises issues as to who has responsibility for monitoring staff during the probationary period.

ACAS purport that issues of poor performance during the probationary period should be rare if the recruitment and selection process and induction has been thorough. Herein lies a problem, especially if these processes are devolved to managers who may have little or no understanding of HR matters.

Training and development was not mentioned by the top team, and neither was the potential to dismiss during the probationary period. This suggests a gap in the understanding of the probation process. In reality it should be a mechanism for the organisation to prove itself to the new recruit and vice-versa – a true two way process. For new recruits who are not performing as expected/required
there should be options, for example, an extension to the probationary period during which time appropriate training and development can take place.

The top team identified the following improvements to probation:

- Extending the probationary period (EMG4)
- Understanding the administrative processes and protocols (EMG2)
- A better link between Induction and probation with clear probationary schedules, regular reviews and written confirmation upon successful completion (EMG1).

5.10 STAFF REVIEW

Members of EMG were asked to assess whether they considered the staff review and development scheme to be: fully integrated; used annually but with further developments necessary; not used frequently enough; or not used at all.

EMG4 was of the view that “yes I think it is fully integrated, but it is only part of it because, OK, you can kind of review, you can go through the mechanics of it every six months, but its the bits in between that matter and are probably even more important” (EMG4). EMG1 also saw value in the “bits in between” the review, talking about the usefulness of having fortnightly issues sessions with his/her managers. EMG1 also made the point that with some managers it was necessary to meet more often, even on a daily basis, in order to address potential issues in a timely fashion.

EMG3 was confident about the merits of having a staff review scheme in place:

My experience of the staff review scheme is that I've always had one from when I started in 1987 in this place….I've always appraised staff, I've always you know, felt the urge…If you are
going to performance manage people, then there must be a way of monitoring that, and if you don’t have development appraisal or some form of scheme, you’re failing yourself, you’re failing the organisation and in particular you’re failing the individual, you know? (EMG3).

EMG2 talked about other models of staff appraisal, for example in the Health Service, which had much more of a “bite” to them, explaining that without the right mechanisms, it was “really difficult to get into those issues of under-performance until things get really bad”. He/she went on to explain that the Strategy Development Office were doing a lot of good work around tighter target setting and more clear objective setting in order that there would be more evidence which could be used for:

measuring the outcomes of the schools performance against the against the corporate strategic objectives. That’s coming, it’s on its way and will be useful in determining which schools are meeting their objectives…..or why they are not, because it may not be relevant for everyone to contribute to everything – the typical thing about the School of Sport and widening access!…but at least you can have the debate…you are the lowest school in that respect, isn’t that strange!? (EMG2).

The necessity of having tighter target setting and clearer objective setting was picked up by all four members of EMG, with EMG1 stating that “people should have half a dozen clear performance objectives and these are not just things they are going to be doing in their job description, but these are things… where there is going to be some change…” (EMG1).

EMG3 agreed with EMG2 that the performance management element was missing from the current staff review and development scheme but went on to say that:
…..I think the problem that we have at UL is more about compliance rather than anything else and we ought to have people complying for the good of the organisation really – not so much accountable – although you could argue, what’s the difference – its difficult to differentiate between the two, but compliance is a problem and I think performance management can certainly help in terms of compliance (EMG2).

EMG1 however, was not optimistic about being able to introduce anything more robust:

_I personally don’t feel optimistic of UL being able to implement an appraisal because quite a lot of the management in UL is personality driven – its not really driven by the business objectives, its you know, whose mates or who likes who, or who hung around with who 66 years ago. I think that’s a difficult environment to put appraisal in….there is just simply too much opportunity and too much actual behaviour of ‘blaming off’ on other people, so its not easy (EMG1)._

The culture of an organisation is an important element of successful performance management. The Cabinet Office (2004, p.34) claim that having a “can do culture, inspired by strong leadership" is a must have characteristic displayed by high performing organisations. In addition, the IiP standard, Charter Mark/CSE and the HSE standards are all specifically designed to engender a culture of continuous improvement in organisations that adopt them. The culture within the senior management team will to some extent, determine the degree to which the university is able to drive forward the performance agenda in such a way that it is conducive to managers and staff.

5.10.1 Staff Review Improvements

Suggestions for improvements to the staff review and development process were invited.
I think the scheme as it stands is fine – it's pretty straightforward. But I do wonder about the whole business about performance, because if we're serious about performance, and at the moment it is really about review and development and for all kinds of reasons, performance is being left to one side...we've had to take a hard nosed stance because we lost market share and so we're in a position now where we are monitoring a whole range of activity on a monthly basis. And we sit in this room every Monday – the management team – and talk about those targets on a weekly basis and the teams look at them on a monthly basis. So I think that's the only way we can move forward so, (I shouldn't be saying this) but we do what we have to do in terms of staff review and development but we've also got an alternative sort of process running sort of concurrently (EMG 4)

But yeah it could be, it could be, it could be improved all the time....but even so I think that the managers that report to me have difficulty getting from what we've talked about in terms of performance objectives, to the training and development they need to do that job, and that is a very under developed part of the process in my view you know.

It's very, very ad hoc and in some cases for example Professor Lupin has come from the academic end of UL...umm, he obviously has an expectation of much higher external courses than people in the administration have come to expect. And I mean I think within the schools they're out all the time on conferences and programmes. My problem with him is keeping him in! I almost don't dare send him a flyer about a course because he thinks I'm sending him on one! (EMG 1)

I think we should have an appraisal scheme because what we have in the staff review, evidently we do set objectives - I think in a sense those very often are not related to performance management – I do think we need another formal way particularly in terms of managers, of measuring either over and above perhaps or it could be integrated into the present scheme and then you could call it a Staff Development and Appraisal Scheme, but I think there needs to be another element in terms of performance management (EMG 3)

Figure 5.4: Staff Review Improvements
Despite over 20 years of trying, (Jarrett, 1985; Dearing, 1997; Bett, 1999) staff appraisal is still not fully integrated into HEIs and Beesly et al. (2004, p.12) report that there is “a distinct sense of déjà vu when reading some of the challenges identified”. This continuing struggle is mirrored by the top team when they talk about UL’s scheme as not being developed enough and hence inadequate in terms of performance management.

Two of the top team were keen to improve the staff review scheme by making it more performance management orientated and particularly liked the “bite” that other external schemes often seem to have. The top team were adamant that tighter and clearer target and objective setting was essential if they were to be able to measure performance against the corporate strategic plan (CIPD, 2005).

EMG1 wanted to see support managers getting the equivalent access to training and development opportunities as academic managers have. Beesley (2004, p.17) makes reference to some of the improvements other HEIs are making to their schemes including the addition of more developmental strands such as, the allocation of a mentor to support the development of the appraisee, the support for systems of Continuous Professional Development and the encouragement of individuals to take more responsibility for their own development.

The top team also rate the “bits in between the review” (EMG4) as being more important than the formal review. This view aligns with that of Nickols (2000, p.7) who argues that:
performance-related discussions between bosses and subordinates do not require a formal, full blown performance appraisal system. Indeed it can be argued that the real coaching and counselling sessions that shape and improve employee performance occur informally, outside such systems. The same can be said of goal setting and feedback.

EMG3 was of the opinion that the problem at UL was “more about compliance” and thought that performance management would certainly help in terms of ensuring more compliance. However, Archer (2005) is of the view that it is unclear as to how successful any appraisal scheme will be until the reluctance from some academics to accept their management roles and responsibilities has been overcome. The KPMG (2005) review of ‘Rewarding and Developing Staff in Higher Education - good practice in setting HR strategies’ initiative, revealed that aside from new performance management systems, procedures and training, there was also a need for a more common understanding of the concept of performance management across the sector as well as:

\[ a \text{ cultural shift within HEIs towards an acceptance of performance management.....so that performance review becomes the norm, rather than the exception. This will involve tackling poor performance, but also managing good performance. \] (KPMG, 2005, p.7)

5.11 CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND SUCCESSION PLANNING

Members of EMG were asked how they identify and nurture staff as part of their succession planning. EMG1 tried to encourage his/her managers to ensure that they had appropriately skilled people in place who would be able to take over, either in the event of someone leaving, or being absent with a long-term illness. Of concern to EMG1 was the fact that no-one was “champing at the heels” for his/her job, which he/she thought could have serious implications for the
organisation should he/she “just disappear”. On the other hand, EMG1 thought it was quite difficult:

……because often the gap between the manager and the next person down is quite large in UL. I mean, you take the Strategy Development Office and the difference in salary between the Head of Unit and the next person down is twice as much. You know its 50 grand to 25 grand, so its very difficult to think that a more junior person is going to be able to act up. So there aren’t really the ladders and the bridges there (EMG1).

Although the initial response from EMG2 was “with difficulty I think”! he/she tried to expose key members of staff to a range of experiences which would either help to develop an identified skills gap, or present opportunities whereby individuals could encounter different kinds of “environments and contexts” (EMG2) where they could bring things back to the institution. EMG2 also talked about the succession planning arrangements for one of the school’s programmes:

……this week I had a meeting with Ludo Bagman and Cornelius Fudge about the succession planning for the MBA because the member of staff is about to come to retirement age and you know, it’s a very valuable programme to UL, so I’ve asked for a formal succession plan that will go to EMG (EMG2).

EMG3 adopted a more paternalistic stance when considering succession planning and career development, where he/she tried to:

…..engage with them in terms of all the courses that you feel they should be going on, the networking that they should be doing, then when they’re ready to move on, the job applications. Succession planning is very important when you feel it appropriate, but it doesn’t apply to everybody – but I’ve got a couple of young men that it very much applies to and a young lady that it applies to and I give them advice about their potential development and what they should be doing- particularly about networking etc, etc. which I think is very important (EMG3).
In contrast, EMG4 talked about the wake up call they had experienced:

We went through a kind of difficult period about 18 months ago when we lost six or seven key staff – I mean they were kind of headhunted. But not only did we lose a lot of experience, we also lost a lot of pen and ink because they took that with them and we’re having to do all that again in-house.

This situation prompted the department to take career development and succession planning more seriously, making certain that more robust systems and practices were put in place to protect from similar disasters in the future:

…….It used to be the case that a couple of individuals owned the management of a part of the organisation – no longer the case! That is now devolved much deeper into the organisation, so we are now in a position, for example with my own kind of line management, there is no longer a single individual that is the “font of knowledge”. That is now shared….so if there is one individual in a key role, there are at least two other individuals in the organisation that understand the key issues, sit in on meetings and kind of own that – and its actually worked, because we’ve had a key individual loss for two months now and we’ve not reached a critical position out there because we’ve put that kind of succession planning in place, the individuals directly below that individual are now sitting in and we’ve done that consciously and transparently, so people know why. And the positives from that are that individuals can often see the space for career progression – ‘cos I think its important and have always believed this – I would always much prefer to “grow” in-house the kind of expertise we need to move up, rather than buy in, because you’ve got the understanding, you’ve got the kind of loyalty – all those things. So we are now – and quite successfully – growing our own kind of future managers in-house (EMG4).

5.11.1 Succession Planning Improvements

Only one respondent commented on parts of the succession planning process that they thought should be improved:
I mean its horses for courses obviously, really. I mean on the academic front it would be things that are enabling academics who have some capability to shine in management, to shine. And I think we don’t have that because the gap between the Head of School and the next one down is a senior lecturer, so we don’t have the sort of principal lecturers that are given the corporate wide role etc. to the extent that we have them, they’re off on some academic thing or other and they’re not doing the corporate management. And on the administration front, I mean there clearly is a lot of work to do, to encourage line managers, to encourage the staff beneath them as it were – if you can talk about it in that way! – to be placed in more situations where they can do presentations and kind of be seen to hone and develop their skills you know, being able to contribute in the managerial sphere which is nearly always quite corporate and we don’t have it I don’t think. (EMG 1)

Figure 5.5: Succession Planning Improvements

The LFHE (2009, on-line) stress the importance of HEIs viewing succession planning as a means of creating a “pipeline” of talent rather than a tap to be turned on and off suggesting that HEIs should have “at least two ready now” candidates for every critical role. HEIs are also advised to adopt a “grow-your-own strategy” which is not only more cost effective than seeking talent externally, but can also have the added advantage of motivating existing staff. This advice equates well with EMG4’s succession planning activities.

The LFHE (2009, on-line) also advocate that senior managers need to “roll up their sleeves” and pro-actively seek to identify either individuals or groups of staff who can be added to a “talent pool” so that they can be developed over a period of time in readiness to apply for the more senior positions when they become vacant. Both EMG2 and EMG3 actively engage with their managers to
develop them in this way, exposing them to different environments, contexts and networks.

What is not clear is how formalised this process of succession planning or career development is, albeit it does happen in practice. EMG4 openly does it out of competitive necessity, EMG2 seems to nurture and develop managers as part of the natural learning and teaching ethos, EMG3 appears to take a more paternalistic stance and EMG1 “encourages” managers to succession plan, but finds it difficult because of the large salary differentials between the manager and the next person down, and lack of “ladders and bridges” (EMG1).

As suggested by Mayo (2007), the top team used a variety of development methods to bring staff on, but no reference was made to any formal management development linked to succession planning (LFHE, 2006).

5.12 REWARDING PERFORMANCE

The top team were asked for their views on rewarding good performance. EMG4 was of the opinion that because reward meant different things to different people, it could sometimes be a sensitive issue to discuss. However, he/she was adamant that it should be about incentivising staff, for example it could be:

*freeing up someone’s time so that they can engage in research, but it could be about going off to undertake a particular piece of work that they are interested in – so it’s about defining that, it’s about incentivising staff and at the end of the day if you talk about a sort of rewards/incentive scheme, people think it’s a bit crude because people see it as money, but I think its about how to incentivise individuals to achieve targets; and people are incentivised by a whole variety of things and I think it all goes hand in hand if you are talking about performance (EMG4).*
The majority were in full agreement that reward was not simply about money, but rather about some of the softer things such as being accepted, being valued, being trusted to do a good job, being treated fairly in the work place and not abused. EMG2 talked about the importance of positive feedback as a reward:

*I mean this week, Viktor wasn’t very well and I thought lets go and get him a get well card, and say thank you for what you do and don’t worry that you’re not here. You know? So it’s sometimes just dropping a card to somebody or a note to somebody. Not over the top so that it becomes kind of meaningless, but I think positive feedback is a reward yeah?* (EMG2).

EMG3 suggested other forms of reward “….sabbaticals, more money for professional development, attending more courses etc, etc, Rewarding performance isn’t simply about money. Even if you stick a star on their forehead and say you’re the star for the day!”

However, views amongst the top managers were more divergent when it came to discussing money. EMG1 felt that people would “take less money if they had a better quality of life and more respect at work” whilst EMG3 thought that critically for more people, money was the most important factor.

Performance Related Pay (PRP) was also an issue amongst the top managers with EMG4 and EMG3 actively for the principle of PRP and EMG1 vehemently against. When talking about reward, EMG4 states that:

*….I would have a performance management tool and measure managers’ performance within that and I would look at things with the academic re-structuring so there is a performance related element – performance related pay. Now, that is incredibly controversial. But I think in reality if you want to talk about performance and you want to talk about targets then you have got*
to have some kind of realistic support and infrastructure and I’m sorry, but our current staff review and development scheme doesn’t actually get us there (EMG4).

EMG3, whilst also being very much in favour of PRP, was more cautious stating that:

…..I think a base salary, but I am also very much in favour of – I have to be very careful – this one has got to be very well thought through because inevitably, who do you reward? I mean is it just the top guy or the top lady or the top you know? I think if you are going to reward performance in a particular unit or a particular school you have to try wherever possible to ensure that everybody is included …. (EMG3)

EMG4 however, raises his/her concern over the culture needed for successfully introducing PRP:

…the difficulty we have got is the culture, because the Unions – I mean its been fascinating because we put forward a proposal to introduce a small element of performance related pay and the radar went straight out and there was outcry – performance related pay! Scandalous! But the way around that is to keep it in for managers, and I’m going to argue to keep that in (EMG4).

EMG1 did not share the views of EMG3 and EMG4 stating that:

I’m not really in favour of performance related pay at all – its highly divisive, highly subjective. In my experience its usually money for the boys and I think there are huge gender differences in the ways that peoples’ contribution is evaluated. My experience of life is that men typically get much higher rewards for much, much less contribution, and their mistakes are more often overlooked. And furthermore, I think that what happens is that men avoid difficult jobs where they are more likely to fail. They try to push that work towards the women, so I’m not in favour of performance related pay because I don’t think its kosher (EMG1).

Reward strategies, although complicated, can play a significant part in motivating and incentivising staff to perform well, but 67% of organisations currently do not have a formal reward strategy in place (CIPD, 2008). Tulip
(2004) suggests that organisations are now turning to a variety of alternative and more tangible methods of reinforcing the message, not only as part of promoting and rewarding the good performance of existing employees, but also as part of their recruitment and retention strategies. The top team did not make any reference to the correlation between a reward strategy and recruitment, performance and retention suggesting an under-developed understanding which may need to be explored further. They did however, identify a number of non-financial benefits that could be used to incentivise staff (e.g. being accepted, being valued, saying thank you, staff development, sabbaticals). These are reflected by the CIPD (2004) who contend that there is now more of a focus on non-financial rewards such as recognition and personal and career development.

The CIPD (2008) Reward Survey found that the top ten employer-provided benefits included: 25 days’ or more paid leave, training and career development, free tea/coffee/cold drinks, enhanced maternity/paternity leave, life assurance, and car allowances. Members of EMG did not mention some of the benefits that UL offer such as the contributory pension schemes, generous annual leave, occupational health care etc. This might be because they are taken somewhat for granted rather than being promoted as benefits to staff.

EMG were split in their views when the discussions focused on monetary reward. Torrington, Hall and Taylor (2002, p.562) purport that pay (as part of reward) can be “one of the main influences on the degree to which people value
"their employment" since it has the propensity to affect the economic viability and social standing of people’s lives. Some of the top team thought that quality of life was more important than the pay, whilst others thought that in general, the most important aspect was the pay. The introduction of the NFA and new pay and grading framework for the sector has been critical in securing a more acceptable level of pay for staff working in HE.

Members of EMG were also divided over the benefits or otherwise, of PRP (Lewis, 2001). In addition, they did not make mention of the psychological contract, (Pointon and Ryan, 2004) although it could be argued that the university needs to invest in developing and promoting a strong reward strategy and performance management system before it can expect to secure that level of buy-in from staff.

5.13 OVERALL CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.13.1 Understanding Performance Management

The first critical issue emanating from the interviews with the EMG managers was the differences in the understanding of the term performance management. Two macro and two micro interpretations emerged covering a range of issues:

- the performance of the organisation against indicators and benchmarks;
- the achievement of academic and research priorities through the translation of organisational objectives into individual objectives;
- the setting of objectives which benefit both the organisation as well as the individual; and
- a host of practical examples which demonstrate under performance such as overspent budgets, missed deadlines, things that were out of date, not well presented or simply shoddy.
The holistic, complex and multi-disciplinary nature of performance management, as described by the Cranfield School of Management (2007), did not come across in their individual responses which appeared to be focused on performance at one level. The top team were all silent about the role of people development in performance management and continuous improvement.

The implications of this are critical. Without a common understanding of the holistic, complex and multi-disciplinary nature of performance management, there is a danger that different standards are being applied by different managers across the organisation, sending out mixed messages to the SMG managers.

**Recommendations:**

The adoption of a performance management model would provide a better understanding of the complex and multi-disciplinary nature of performance management as well as a more structured framework for managing performance holistically.

A briefing session should be required (for each management group) on the performance management model outlining management roles and responsibilities within that context and emphasising the contribution of people development to continuous improvement.
5.13.2 Measuring and Managing Performance at School and Unit Level

Although some members of EMG alluded to the underdeveloped nature of performance measurement frameworks in HE – a view shared by the CUC (2006), it was recognised that some progress in relation to target setting at UL had been made over the last five years. In keeping with the Canfield School of Management (2007), several members of the top team understood the important connection between strategy and performance objectives, although no reference was made to the formulation of SMART objectives as a method of translating strategy into practice (HM Treasury, 2001), or of action to improve performance, based on the insight provided by performance measures. It can be concluded from the interviews that there does not appear to be an agreed system for measuring and managing performance and that it is being managed in different ways.

The absence of appropriate SMART objectives can make it difficult for staff throughout the organisation, to relate to corporate aims and objectives and understand their contribution towards those. The implications of having limited or ill-defined performance measures in place are that information relating to key performance areas is unlikely to be collected. Assessment of performance can subsequently be subjective rather than based on factual evidence.

**Recommendations:**

The organisation would benefit from further promulgating the CUC (2006) KPIs and further advancing the use of the (corporate) BSC vertically and horizontally through the management levels within UL, so that managers and staff can make
a rational connection between top level indicators, school/unit indicators and individual performance.

Staff development activity should be planned to support staff in their roles. It is recommended that each school/unit provide an annual staff development plan to EMG members as part of this process.

5.13.3 Benchmarking

It can be concluded that where PIs have been used to benchmark at UL, some tangible benefits can be seen, for example performance improvements in KTPs and the RAE. Some members of EMG found benchmarking unhelpful since comparisons were not always like for like and there were too many variables affecting the measures. However, external assessments such as QAA and Estyn were thought to produce more helpful measures. The HM Treasury (2001, p.23) recommend that monitoring – comparing performance over time or with other organisations – should be a key component of any successful performance measurement system. The repercussion of not having in place robust benchmarking processes is that it is difficult to monitor the quality and standards of the organisation against the open market or direct competitors. This is a lost opportunity to keep abreast of local, national and international performance and developments, resulting in potential organisational inability to be responsive.
**Recommendations:**

That EMG should determine and make known throughout the organisation which benchmarking measures are useful and which are not. This will ensure that valuable comparisons take place and that only relevant data is collected.

Following on from this, there is a need to make explicit to staff the criteria against which performance will be measured.

5.13.4 Measuring and Managing Individual Performance

It is evident that members of EMG were measuring and managing individual performance in a number of different ways – some of which were similar to the ways in which they managed school/unit performance, for example having regular contact through team and one-to-one meetings, a formal cascading of information and staff review. Torrington *et al.* (2002) recommend that employee performance can be managed informally as part of every day management activities following a simple three step approach - Planning performance, Supporting performance and Reviewing performance (similar to the liP principles of Plan, Do and Review). There is some evidence that the top team are applying these principles, but it is not possible to discern the extent to which the planning, supporting and reviewing are being followed. The implications of not monitoring staff performance on a regular basis (as part of the day-to-day management arrangements) are that it can become difficult to tackle issues of under-performance in a timely manner. Similarly if appropriate staff development, mentoring or coaching activities are not attended to sufficiently,
staff can become under-developed and therefore less effective in their roles. This is a missed performance improvement opportunity.

**Recommendations:**

Adoption of a performance management model with agreed performance measures would provide a clearer framework for managing individual performance. The criteria against which performance will be measured should be made explicit to staff.

There is a need to develop a more robust coaching and mentoring framework within UL to support staff in their roles.

It is expected (as part of the staff performance review) that all staff should have a number of agreed SMART work and development objectives (linked to UL’s strategies and plans). Members of EMG are advised to consider what steps might be taken to combat corporate non-compliance.

**5.13.5 Managing underperformance**

Overall, the findings indicated that half of the top team were comfortable and willing to deal with issues of under-performance whilst the other half seemed more reticent to do so. However, all members of EMG were in agreement that tackling issues of under-performance was difficult for a variety of reasons. Some members of EMG were critical of UL’s capability procedure and Staff Review and Development scheme, preferring instead a “mechanism for getting at those under performance issues more explicitly” (EMG2).
The Audit Commission (2000) contend that this reluctance to tackle issues of under performance can be due to a fear of destroying a previously good working relationship or of potential conflict, possibly leading to accusations of bullying or racial/sexual harassment. Armstrong and Ward (2005) found that managers often expected that the appraisal system would single-handedly solve all performance issues and yet their research showed that the main skill gap identified, was the lack of ability to have those awkward conversations with under-performers, because of an inability to deliver constructive feedback. If the top team are either not comfortable with dealing with issues of poor performance or not confident in the tools available to assist them in this process, then it is unlikely that issues of poor performance will be addressed. This indicates to other managers and staff throughout the organisation that no action will be taken in response to poor performance and therefore it is acceptable to behave in that manner.

**Recommendations:**

There is a need to review UL’s performance management processes e.g. the capability procedure to ensure that they are fit for purpose and owned by the top team.

Training and development opportunities should be provided for managers in some of the softer skill areas such as:

- *How to have those awkward performance conversations with staff*

  And some of the procedural/legislative areas such as:

- *How to conduct effective investigations and stay within the law*
5.13.6 Recruitment and Selection

The overall responses from EMG did not indicate that the recruitment and selection process was seen by the top team as a critical component of organisational performance and there was no reference to UL’s HR strategy in the process. HEFCE, (2002, p.4), states that “The world class reputation of UK higher education depends on its ability to recruit and retain high quality staff” and the CIPD (2007) assert that “having the right person, in the right place, at the right time, is crucial to organisational performance”. When discussing recruitment and selection, the top team did not mention the following:

- The legal framework of employment law, including the requirement for robust job evaluation processes to protect against potential claims of equal pay for work of equal value;
- The potential costs of getting the recruitment process wrong, both in terms of discrimination claims or appointing someone who is unable to perform satisfactorily;
- The training and development of managers to ensure they have the appropriate skills and knowledge.

It is unlikely that senior managers would not be aware of these issues, but more likely, that they are not seen as significant. There is a sense that recruitment and selection is viewed as an administrative house keeping exercise rather than as a complex and strategic tool for recruiting and retaining high quality staff. The potential implications are that the next level of managers – the SMG – are likely to emulate these omissions in their recruitment and selection practices.
**Recommendations:**

EMG may wish to consider the relevance of broader input into the development of the HR strategy as a means of encouraging wider ownership of HR related aims, objectives and targets.

It would be advantageous to engage a firm of solicitors to provide a bespoke session to the top team on key HR responsibilities and accountabilities.

There is a need to review the UL recruitment and selection processes and guidelines.

The recruitment and selection processes need to be supported by some bite sized training modules for example, writing JDs and PSs, Interviewing techniques, Job analysis and evaluation, immigration law, equalities legislation etc. so that managers are fully skilled in these areas.

That further consideration be given to the improvements sought by EMG in the recruitment and selection process:

- The abolition of ‘paper’ based recruitment and selection processes (as in the applications for Professorship and Readership) (EMG1);
- The freedom to be able to gather other people’s impressions of candidates as part of a wider selection process (EMG3);
- The introduction of presentations across the organisation for positions relating to teaching and learning (EMG2);
- The establishment of a stronger ‘corporate’ link between organisational and academic aspirations and the better matching of skilled individuals to those requirements through the recruitment and selection process (EMG4).
5.13.7 Induction

Although induction is recognised as a complex task, the CIPD (2006) advocate that all organisations should take a more holistic view and have in place a well thought-out and planned induction programme. It is not clear from the top team responses whether induction is recognised as part of the wider performance management agenda, or indeed as the beginning of a planned retention strategy (Corbridge and Pilbeam, 1998).

Whilst it is evident that some aspects of induction do take place, there is no reference by the top team to key parts of induction such as:

- The identification of training needs including essential health and safety training; setting performance expectations including performance management and reviews;
- Standards and rules such as corporate standards of behaviour, use of e-mail, time keeping;
- Terms and conditions of employment such as absence reporting, expenses, hours of work, pensions, probationary period;
- Employee relations for example trade union membership, consultation, discipline and grievance procedures;
- Personal documentation and checks such as Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks, security card and number, payment of salary details, e-mail account, issue of useful background information (Rankin, 2004).

Although EMG take induction seriously, there is a sense that induction is not fully understood as a complex and strategic tool for retaining high quality staff and ensuring they reach optimum levels of performance sooner rather than later. There was no evidence to suggest that the top team evaluate the effectiveness of the induction processes undertaken within their portfolios of responsibility, for example % of staff leaving within the first six months (CIPD, 2007). Although there is an expectation from EMG members, that SMG members should take the lead on induction “and it’s the schools to a certain
extent that should be inducting their new course directors – but I don’t think they are” (EMG 2) the monitoring systems appear to be insufficient. The potential implications are that if EMG are not regarding HR processes (such as induction) as their overall responsibility, or not making clear their expectations to SMG members, then there is a danger that induction will be either ignored or diluted. Staff that have not been inducted appropriately will not understand organisational, school/unit expectations and will find it difficult to reach optimum levels of performance. Induction should be regarded as a performance management tool. Any failure to carry out an appropriate induction is therefore a missed performance improvement opportunity.

**Recommendations:**

It is recommended that HR work on a bespoke basis with the top team to agree and put in place corporate standards for induction across UL.

That arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of induction at a corporate level are agreed and implemented;

That further consideration be given to the improvements sought by EMG in the induction process at UL:

- A specific induction programme for programme directors to ensure that they fully understood their role, level of authority and academic procedures;
- The formalisation of a UL mentoring process across the organisation to assist in supporting new staff during their induction;
- The re-introduction of a face-to-face corporate induction programme for new staff.
5.13.8 Probation

The top team made no reference to the connection between the contract of employment and probation as recommended by ACAS (2008). Evidence suggests that probation is viewed by EMG members as a bureaucratic process that managers are required to undertake. ACAS (2008) recommend that reviews of performance should be carried out at regular intervals and that records of progress during the probationary period should be kept. Although EMG3 was not “particularly au fait” with the probationary process, he/she filled out the forms when reminded by HR. This suggests a reactive rather than proactive approach to the probation process, and raises issues as to who has responsibility for monitoring staff during the probationary period. Training and development was not mentioned by the top team, and neither was the potential to dismiss during the probationary period. This suggests a gap in the understanding of the probation process. As with the induction process, the potential implications are that if EMG are not regarding HR processes (such as probation) as their overall responsibility, or not making clear their expectations to SMG members, then there is a danger that probation will be either ignored or diluted. Staff that have not been monitored as part of the probationary arrangements are automatically confirmed into post by default. Probation should be regarded as a performance management tool. Any failure to carry out an appropriate probation is therefore a missed performance improvement opportunity.
**Recommendations:**

It is recommended that HR work on a bespoke basis with the top team to re-affirm corporate standards for probation across UL, for example policy and procedure and to agree arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of probation across UL;

That further consideration be given to the improvements sought by EMG in the probation process at UL:

- Extending the probationary period (EMG4)
- Understanding the administrative processes and protocols (EMG2)
- A better link between induction and probation with clear probationary schedules, regular reviews and written confirmation upon successful completion (EMG1).

**5.13.9 Staff Performance Review**

Despite over 20 years of trying (Jarrett, 1985; Dearing, 1997; Bett, 1999) staff appraisal is still not fully integrated into HEIs and Beesly et al. (2004, p.12) report that there is “a distinct sense of déjà vu when reading some of the challenges identified”. It can be concluded that this continuing struggle is mirrored by the top team when they talk about UL’s scheme as not being developed enough and hence inadequate in terms of performance management. Two of the top team were keen to improve the staff review scheme by making it more performance management orientated and particularly liked the “bite” (EMG2) demonstrated in that other external schemes. EMG members were agreed that tighter and clearer target and objective setting was essential if they were to be able to measure performance against the corporate strategic plan. EMG3 was of the opinion that the problem
at UL was “more about compliance” and thought that performance management would certainly help in terms of ensuring more compliance. There are significant performance implications for an organisation if the formal staff performance review scheme is either not effective or not being carried out. Staff performance review is one of the main performance management tools and any failure to carry out appropriate performance reviews is therefore a missed opportunity to maximise performance.

**Recommendations:**

Review the existing scheme to create a more performance orientated one i.e. one which requires the assessment of performance against objectives;

In line with Archer (2005), it is recommended that appropriate line-management structures are in place to facilitate the staff performance review process and that managers understand their role and responsibilities within that context;

Put in place monitoring and evaluation processes for staff performance review – are reviews taking place? Are they being carried out effectively?

Ensure that training on the concept of performance management is available to all managers and staff across the university;

Put in place mentoring and coaching arrangements for key roles and build on CPD activity;
Produce guidelines on SMARTER objective setting as part of the staff performance review process;

In line with the KPMG (2005) recommendations, facilitate a culture shift where review becomes part of the norm rather than the exception, perhaps through the compliance route.

That further consideration be given to the improvements sought by EMG in the staff review process at UL:

- Need to take a more hard-nosed performance orientated stance in relation to appraisal (EMG4).
- Managing expectations about staff development and making processes between support and academic staff more equitable (EMG1).
- There needs to be a performance management element to the staff review scheme (EMG3).

5.13.10 Career Development and Succession Planning

The LFHE (2007) advocate that senior managers need pro-actively seek to identify either individuals or groups of staff who can be added to a talent pool in order that they can be developed over a period of time in readiness to apply for the more senior positions when they become vacant. Evidence suggests that both EMG2 and EMG3 actively engage with their managers to develop them in this way, exposing them to different environments, contexts and networks. What is not clear is how formalised this process of succession planning or career development is, albeit it does happen in practice. EMG4 has transparent succession planning arrangements in place borne out of competitive necessity, EMG2 seems to nurture and develop managers as part of the natural learning and teaching ethos, EMG3 appears to take a more paternalistic stance and
EMG1 encourages managers to succession plan, but finds it difficult because of the large salary gaps between the manager and the next person down, and lack of “ladders and bridges”. As suggested by Mayo (2007), the top team used a variety of development methods to bring staff on, but no reference was made to any formal management development linked to succession planning (LFHE, 2007). The implication of not having formalised succession planning arrangements in place, is that the organisation may be unable to fill key posts, particularly if they become vacant unexpectedly.

**Recommendations:**

Work on a bespoke basis with individual members to look at charting and implementing formal succession planning arrangements for their particular area of responsibility, for example utilising the shared knowledge and practice model promoted by EMG4;

Implement formal management development training arrangements, for example Future Leaders Programme, Heads of Department Programmes, through the LFHE as part of UL’s succession planning and career development arrangements;

Develop a fast track pool of multi-skilled staff who can resource a variety of vacancies – perhaps through the Concordat arrangements for research staff;

Look at ways of minimising the gap between the Dean of School/Head of Unit and the next level down, for example through the use of Deputy roles.
That further consideration be given to the improvements sought by EMG in the succession planning process at UL:

- Enabling academics to excel in management roles with a more corporate focus.

### 5.13.11 Reward

The top team did not make any reference to the correlation between a reward strategy and recruitment, performance and retention suggesting an under-developed understanding which may need to be explored further. Members of EMG did identify a range of non-financial benefits that could be used to incentivise staff e.g. being accepted, being valued, saying thank you, providing staff development and sabbaticals. These mirror the CIPD (2004) recommendations. The top team did not mention some of the other benefits that UL offers such as the contributory pension schemes, generous annual leave, occupational health care, etc. This may be because they are taken for granted rather than being promoted as benefits to staff.

Although the introduction of the NFA and new pay and grading framework for the sector has been critical in securing a more acceptable level of pay for staff working in HE, EMG were divided in their views when the discussions focused on monetary reward. Torrington, Hall and Taylor (2002, p.562) purport that pay (as part of reward) can be “one of the main influences on the degree to which people value their employment” since it has the propensity to affect the economic viability and social standing of people’s lives. Some of the top team thought that the quality of life was more important than the pay, whilst others
thought that in general, the most important aspect was the pay. Members of EMG were also divided over the benefits or otherwise, of PRP (Lewis, 2001). This division of views is likely to impact upon the ability of the top team to agree an appropriate reward strategy for UL.

EMG did not mention of the psychological contract, (Pointon and Ryan, 2004) during discussions, although it could be argued that the university needs to invest in developing and promoting a strong reward strategy and performance management system before it can expect to secure that level of buy-in from staff. The implications of not having a fully realised reward strategy in place is that staff will not recognise the considerable benefits that are on offer and may feel under-valued. This may lead to future retention issues.

Recommendations:
That UL consider developing a reward strategy and publicise current rewards more widely to staff so that they are viewed as benefits, for example the contributory pension scheme, generous annual leave, occupational health etc.

The next chapter, Chapter Six, will present and analyse the findings from the interviews with UL’s Senior Management Group (SMG).
Chapter Six

Performance Management Conversations with the Senior Management Team

Analysis of interviews with UL’s Senior Managerial Group.

April 2009
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CHAPTER SIX

6.1 INTRODUCTION

All Heads of Schools (HOSs) and Heads of Units (HOUs) that make up UL’s Senior Managerial Group (SMG) were invited to take part in a one-to-one semi-structured interview to discuss their views about performance management.

Eight out of the nine HOSs agreed to take part in the interviews, as did nine out of the eleven HOUs. This chapter serves to analyse the conversations that took place during those interviews. A detailed transcript of responses is provided for further information in Volume Two, Section Two.

The identity of the HOSs and HOUs has been disguised as follows:

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6.2 UNDERSTANDING THE TERM PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Respondents were asked for their opinions on what constitutes performance, and how they would describe it in relation to their role.
6.2.1 A View from the HOSs

The association between performance management and school development plans, the alignment of the school plan with UL’s strategic objectives and the achievement of agreed measures such as aims, targets and objectives were made by four (50%) of the eight HOSs:

To me, in order for it (performance) to be measurable it would have to be achieving its objectives, because we now have the school development plans as they’re now called, and the way I chose to present it was to go through each of UL’s objectives in turn - all 14 of them – although I think I might have taken out the HR one because that was to do with HR rather than me so…(SMGHOSF16).

Another HOS discussed the importance of recognising and defining different levels of performance i.e. at organisational, school or individual level, as well as different types of performance:

At school level it’s about creating a model vision with aims. This sets your template for performance. If I give you an example of two types of performance: On the one hand, you can take on a youngster who wants to compete in the Olympics at 18. This scenario would involve a long term plan with timescales against age at all the different stages. You would have to identify short falls in performance at all the different stages and put in place appropriate development to make sure that the individual was able to meet the required elements of performance within the agreed timescales. On the other hand, if you had an Olympic competitor, they would be aiming to perform at the highest levels at all times and would need to sustain their performance over a prolonged period of time (SMGHOSM12).

SMGHOSM12 then described the usefulness of mapping out the main components of performance through the use of a spidergram, and then rating their accomplishment against each element.
Other HOSs used words such as ‘success’, ‘operating effectively’ and ‘taking responsibility’ to describe performance, with one HOS talking about the importance of people having ownership, being motivated and being accountable for their work. Another took a more parochial view:

The sort of things that have got to be done well – not that they always are – are the three basic things of being a teacher – you’ve got to be able to assess well, you’ve got to be able to prepare well, and be up to speed on the subject matter. If a person can do all of those things, and does them well, then they are like gold and that’s the performance that counts (SMGHOSM14).

Another HOS was more concerned however, that performance management, was “a popular term used mainly in the IT and/or business world” (SMGHOSM10).

6.2.2 A View from the HOUs

Five of the HOUs (55%) equated performance management to having business plans in place with clear objectives, meeting day-to-day operational targets and having clear line management structures with formal cascading processes:

Managing performance in the working environment is about identifying what performance is required through an objective setting process, establishing standards and targets for performance, then developing a methodology for saying, well how do we know you are working to those standards? That to me is performance the way I see it and it’s linked to a very formal process starting with strategic objectives going down to 2nd 3rd and 4th tier so that people have a very clear view of where they are in the organisation (SMGHOUM6).

Another HOU felt that there was another dimension to performance, which was about “…. adding value to what we do through being dynamic in what one is doing and outside the definitions of the job” (SMGHOUM5).
Two HOUs felt that performance was primarily about meeting the needs of the customer (whether internal or external) – “… I mean, we could be the most efficient department in the entire university but if what we were doing is not relevant or beneficial to our customers then it’s pointless, so to me performance is delivering what the customers’ want” (SMGHOUM2), whilst two other HOUs talked about the importance of having developed management information systems in place as well as having the “…ability to advise and influence, to be inquisitive, speculate on information. It’s more difficult to measure but it’s about the individual getting out there” (SMGHOUM5).

Two others referred to the value of engaging with your team and making sure they are motivated. As one HOU said:

\[
\text{We have a management group and a clear line management structure. I don’t dominate and I’m not autocratic in style but at the end of the day I do have to make decisions. I think you have to have clear principles behind anything you do. You need to put people first and you’ve got to know what is right and what is wrong} \quad \text{(SMGHOUM4).}
\]

The CIPD (2008a, online) describe performance management as “complex and capable of being misunderstood” and Armstrong and Baron (1998) try to unravel some of the complexities of performance management when they describe it as a strategic issue concerned with some of the wider issues affecting the organisation and its longer term goals and direction. Three of the SMG made reference to organisational strategy (SMGHOUM6, SMGHOSM10 and SMGHOSF16).
At the same time, Armstrong and Baron (1998) advise that performance management needs to be integrated in such a way that individual and team objectives are aligned with the business, and that functional strategies and plans (particularly those that are HRM/HRD related) are linked across departments, in order that there is a coherent approach to the management and development of people. SMGHOUF9, SMGHOUF5, SMGHOUM3, SMGHOSM12, SMGHOSM13, SMGHOSM15 and SMGHOSF17 were all able to recognise the importance of having plans, objectives and targets in place, but not all of them made the connection between the alignment of those plans, objectives and targets, to the business. There were no SMG members who made reference to the correlation of strategy and plans across departments and no mention was made of any HRM/HRD related activity, except from (SMGHOSF16) who stated …"although I think I might have taken out the HR one (objective) because that was to do with HR rather than me so..."

Armstrong and Baron (1998) further assert that performance management is about achieving individual, team or organisational effectiveness through performance improvement (picked up by SMGHOUM1, SMGHOUF8 and SMGHOSM11) but emphasize that it is equally, if not more importantly, concerned with development. The SMG (apart from the sports analogy given by SMGHOSM12) were all silent about the role of people development in performance management and continuous improvement. The holistic, complex and multi-disciplinary nature of performance management (as described by the Cranfield School of Management (2007), did not come across in the individual responses of the HOSs or HOUs.
6.3 MEASURING AND MANAGING PERFORMANCE AT SCHOOL/UNIT LEVEL

Members of SMG were asked how they measured and managed performance at school/unit level.

6.3.1 A View from the HOSs

Two HOSs stated that they measured and managed performance within their schools on a regular basis through their School Management and Planning Teams (SMPT). They talked about targets for students, budgets and research and the fact that they reviewed progress against the school’s objectives to see if they were achieving them. During their meetings they discussed their approach to business—whether or not they should be doing things differently and whether or not the objectives were still relevant. One HOS also carried out a higher level evaluation of effectiveness “We also have the school’s strategic and operational plan which we always review in March, in terms of looking at anything we might have forgotten that we said we would do! We also carry out an end of year analysis against the plans (SMGHOSM12).

For the remaining schools the picture was patchy with responses ranging from “Well we don’t really measure performance in that sense. I don’t think HR has previously played a really strong part and I think we have only recently put better HR practices and systems in place” (SMGHOSF17) to:

That’s very difficult to answer because the only way, the only time, it’s discussed with everybody individually is in staff development and review and that’s not supposed to be about performance management, so although objectives are set, there are lots of things around that scheme that make it quite clear that it’s nothing
what so ever to do with disciplinary procedures, so it’s very difficult to talk about performance without reward and discipline coming into it (SMGHOSF16).

6.3.1.1 Performance Measures in Schools

Other performance measures in schools included the proportion of staff engaged in research “We currently have about 40 out of 78 which is over half, so quite good”. (SMGHOSM13), the recruitment of students “I’m currently down by about 80” (SMGHOSM13), and assessment “We have a school policy for example that all dissertations are double marked and that all course work and exams are sample double marked – so that’s the beginning of a system” (SMGHOSM14) and the culture:

...and results for me is in terms of climate and we’ve just been made Investors in People and I think the school environment is good – I think it’s very good – but it’s nice to have IiP tell us it is.....I measure climate by talking, by questioning, management by walking about and getting a feel for literally ‘how it is around here’ and by listening and by hearing the story telling – getting to understand the narrative of the school. And the general impression would be that it’s good around here but it’s us against the world sometimes (SMGHOSM10).

Some of the difficulties identified by HOSs that were associated with measuring and managing performance at school level included having the wrong type of measure or the wrong weighting to measures. One example given, was that of UL’s resource allocation model, which was thought to be “fundamentally flawed” (SMGHOSM10) in the way monies were either given to and/or taken away from schools so “the big get bigger and the little ones scrabble around”. The HOSs also thought the emphasis on financial controls was given too much weighting:

...it’s a fiscal system and this is a people organisation......Now I know, (to use managers speak), that I get discretionary effort from my colleagues – they go the extra mile, they give the extra stuff
and I know at least 3 or 4 schools that do not get that, but the base measure of my effectiveness is have we brought the school in on budget and / or have we put bums on seats, and that is a very narrow measurement of Leadership Effectiveness (SMGHOSM10).

Another difficulty mentioned was the perceived difference between academic and support staff roles when it came to managing performance:

*I think you have to intervene when people are seriously underperforming but actually it’s about how you get to that point where you can kind of open that sort of conversation. The support mechanisms we’ve got e.g. the harassment and bullying policy are kind of very drawn out and being an academic requires that you have a lot of confidence and the one thing you can’t do is knock that confidence, you have to build peoples’ confidence – you might like to consider this, you might like to consider that. The support staff are easier because they either do this or they don’t – academic performance is different* (SMGHOSF17).

Some measures were also thought to be problematic, for example, if you are measuring consistency – as is the case in double marking – then that doesn’t always provide a meaningful yardstick because “you could be consistently rotten, for example, if you are the most powerful person in a subject area and you’re not published, you could drag everyone down to your level” (SMGHOSM14). Similarly, the issue of pass rates and the appropriate maintenance of academic standards was thought to be very complex and difficult to measure. As one HOS explained, if you have a failure rate of 50%, do you criticise your teaching or are the students simply not up to it? “it’s not like producing widgets where you can say we had a failure rate of 2%” (SMGHOSF17).
6.3.2 A View from the HOUs

HOUs spoke of working within defined structures, frameworks, budgets, timescales, and planning processes with some examples being highly process driven:

We have within HR, set objectives in the Corporate Strategic Plan and from that, we have an HR Strategy with its own action plan and objectives. I then have my own personal objectives which are related to that and those of my line manager. Senior officers within HR have their own personal objectives, so in effect they help me to achieve the wider objectives…and wherever possible we’ve got SMART objectives…. we work within a planning framework which is an annual process linked to the budget setting process, linked to the Corporate Strategic Planning process, linked to the 4 year corporate plan – so in that sense we are very, very well structured (SMGHOUM6).

Two HOUs talked about trying to meet client expectations although as one HOU admitted, “what we are not good at, is asking the client what they want!” (SMGHOUM1). The second HOU spoke about how they utilised client feedback which they elicit from surveys that they conduct on a regular basis in an attempt to understand what their customers require. The feedback also helps them to keep abreast of future organisational requirements.

6.3.2.1 Performance Measures in Units

Three HOUs cited the use of annual reports as a means of measuring and managing performance and conveying performance related information to relevant bodies such as committees and HEFCW:

I manage performance through things like annual reports, to see if we achieved what we set out to achieve in our strategies, whether we fell below or whether the world changed and the strategy was wrong in the first place. The best example of that was merger – for UL the world changed! If you think about it this time last year we had only just fallen out of talks with Poppleton and the strategy was set in about June so the strategy for that year was all about merger
Less formal methods of tracking performance included the more regular use of the staff performance review scheme and one-to-one meetings to improve communication and ways of working. As one HOU said:

_It’s about becoming more efficient and effective as well, for example, we are now collecting student fees more effectively which means less debt for the organisation and also frees up time for staff to review their systems. It’s a gradual change process – some people and systems have been here for donkey’s years – we’ve been here for 20 years and we’ve always done it this way for 20 years. OK it might actually be the best way to do it, but you need to review what you are doing to find out!_ (SMGHOUM3).

The majority of HOUs were able to see the association between strategy and performance objectives and targets (Cranfield School of Management, 2007), working within defined structures, budgets, timescales and planning processes. Two HOSs were also able to measure and manage performance within their schools on a regular basis through their School Management and Planning Teams, reviewing progress against the schools plans and objectives. Actions to improve performance, based on the insight provided by performance measures, was inferred by one HOS who said “should we approach things differently? Are there things in this plan which are no longer relevant or not going to work, that we should put a line through? (SMGHOSM12) and by one HOU who recognised the benefits of continuous improvement stating that “It’s about becoming more efficient and effective as well, for example, we are now collecting students fees more effectively which means less debt for the organisation and also frees up some time for staff to review their systems” (SMGHOUM3).
Whilst some HOSs have some measures of performance in place, such as recruitment of student numbers and proportion of staff engaged in research (SMGHOOSM13), other HOSs found that performance measurement was more problematic. Bogue and Hall (2003) highlight some of the conundrums that are presented when trying to determine appropriate measurements, especially around more qualitative areas such as academic quality, whilst Grizzle (2002) warns of the dark side of quantifying work and Ammons (2002) argues that performance measurement systems can fall short of expectations because they are often designed to capture fairly meaningless ‘raw workload’ data. The BSC is used by some HEIs as an approach to measuring and improving performance through the use of a combination of metrics which link to the organisations strategic goals (Balanced Scorecard Institute, 2007). Although the SMG did not mention the BSC, at this juncture, it was still in the early stages of development at UL.

The Audit Commission (2000) recommends that organisations need to be clear from the outset what the requirements of their stakeholders are. It is interesting to note that HEFCW is mentioned by only one person (SMGHOUM3) and that only one HOU states that “we do lots of surveys to engage our customers. We have to understand what our customers need – we have to be in tune with the organisation and the future requirements” (SMGHOUF9).

In keeping with the HM Treasury (2001), one HOU referenced the formulation of SMART objectives as a means of translating strategy into practice, but overall, there was no real sense from the SMG that an explicit performance
measurement system was in place. The Audit Commission (2000), HM Treasury (2001) and DTI (2008) all provide detailed guidance for organisations to assist them in the design and implementation of appropriate performance measurement systems.

6.4 BENCHMARKING

Respondents were asked what they benchmarked performance against and how they determined their performance was good.

6.4.1 Benchmarking in the Schools

Two HOSs cited the recent work of the Strategy Office on providing benchmark information on for example, student intake (as part of the widening access indicators) and some comparative data on the average number of firsts and 2:1s. Although it was acknowledged that “this institution has got a huge way to go on that” (SMGHOSM10), there was also a recognition of the increasing importance that benchmarking is likely to have in the future:

Yes, I think we should use benchmark criteria, but I don’t think it should be all pervasive. Having said that you know, the HESA returns and those sorts of stats – the HEFCW widening access numbers are going to be increasingly important to our strategy and we will as Heads of Schools be much more accountable for those sorts of things (SMGHOSM10).

Other examples of benchmarks that were used in the schools included ‘first destination’, ‘student withdrawal rates’ and the RAE was also mentioned:

In terms of benchmarking, we obviously have the RAE rating. Unfortunately this rating doesn’t actually change over a five to six year period, but our Director of R&D is always trying to make value judgments about others’ performance in relation to our competitors. The recruitment of our students, particularly in relation to their caliber, is very important as a measure. I tend to think that if you
have recruited the best staff and students and have then put in place a good timetable, you should be able to say as a Head of School – “off you go”! (SMGHOSM12).

One HOS stated that they used benchmarking to compare themselves internally with other schools in UL, for example, on student retention rates, but also externally through national comparisons “…so we will compare that with the national benchmarks, yeah, then there’s for example, the gender and balance on our courses…. we compare it with the national benchmarks” (SMGHOSM15).

6.4.2 Benchmarking in the Units

Benchmarking activity took place throughout most of the support units. Various financial indicators such as current asset ratios were used in the Finance section, the Estates Management Statistics were used in Estates to measure themselves against other universities and Facilities carried out price benchmarking annually across their services, using the commercial sector as a yardstick. In the absence of any ‘off the shelf’ benchmarks, some units set their own standards for example: number of students to enter the libraries and learning centres; number of helpdesk calls; level of enquiries during student recruitment, in order to benchmark performance levels year on year.

However, words of caution about benchmarking came from several HOUs with regard to selecting sensible comparators “if you compare yourself with places like Oxford, Cambridge or Durham they are not at all like for like so we tend to use similar organisations to ourselves such as Exeter, Bath or Loughborough”.
Nevertheless, even when benchmarking with similar organisations problems arose, as one HOU explained:

`some of the work we undertook during the merger debate was like looking at apples and pears when we were looking at HR at the University of Poppleton, compared to HR at UL in terms of the cost of the function, the numbers of staff compared to the numbers of students etc. We’re very different organisations, in very different settings, and you can’t simply take a simple benchmark or simple indicators (SMGHOUM6).`

Problems were also identified regarding the use of internal comparisons for benchmarking purposes, highlighting the importance of choosing appropriate measures:

`What I think it is often better to do, is to take a national statistic like sickness absence, which is a problem. It’s recognised in the private sector and it’s recognised in the public sector and it’s getting worse, so one of our objectives is to reduce the opportunity costs of sickness absence by 33% over the life of the Corporate Strategic Plan. That is more meaningful – so it isn’t an HR function, it’s an HR activity that we are taking a lead on. So that’s a more useful way of benchmarking...... If you take the sickness absence target for example, I have a lead role in assisting other sections to reduce their sickness absence, but I also have a responsibility to manage the sickness absence within my own department. Now for me that isn’t so much of a problem because I have 18 staff and little sickness, but for Facilities for example with 100’s of staff and many of them manual workers on low pay, who are in the business of going sick, it wouldn’t be a fair comparison – that’s why I’m loathed to publish statistics which give an indication against a sort of league table, like figures against attendance or non-attendance rates, recruitment, turnout – it doesn’t really help because you don’t know the local circumstances (SMGHOUM6).`

Although there is some benchmarking taking place in UL, it appears to be underdeveloped and there is little evidence of any systematic benchmarking activity across the organisation. This corresponds with the findings of the CUC
(2006, p.19) who identified that “many institutions are still at a relatively early stage of development of KPIs”.

Following a formal review of the HE sectors PIs, the PISG devised a set of criteria so as to be able to assess the validity of indicators assuring that “The indicator should provide information for HEIs that is suitable both for their internal use and for benchmarking themselves against other similar institutions” (HEFCE 2007).

The Audit Commission (2000) outline six key principles underlying effective performance measures and assert that meaningful indicators or measures can only be developed by having an understanding of the requirements of the organisation’s many stakeholders. The development of a ‘Top Ten’ list of high level KPIs (CUC, 2006) has now provided a stronger focus on performance in key areas of institutional activity, including for the first time, ‘Staff and Human Resource Development’ and ‘Governance, Leadership and Management’.

6.5 MEASURING AND MANAGING INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE

Members of SMG were asked how they measure and manage performance at individual level.

6.5.1 HOSs and Individual Performance

Four out of the eight HOSs made mention of the Staff Performance Review Scheme as a means of measuring and managing individual performance. However, there were a number of issues raised with regard to the scheme itself.
One HOS recognised that the scheme did not easily lend itself to appraisal of individual performance since it was primarily designed to be developmental. Nevertheless, some engagement with staff was possible:

... targets tend to be developmental in terms of growing them in terms of their knowledge, skills and understanding. They are not measured in a simplistic way, for example if Hermione Granger is the IT lecturer, I don't measure her work in terms of 'there are extra students this year, she must have done well' – because the recruitment side of things is beyond her control. But I know from student evaluations and student course reporting – more qualitative measures – what the students have said about their experience in terms of qualitative measures, how many people have progressed through that programme and been successful. But then I also say to her, O.K. well, we wanted to grow you didn't we? – have you presented that paper at conference? Have you gone out there and done other things with the ICT, with the international office? And we agree those sorts of developmental targets and I expect her to do that (SMGHOSM10).

A second HOS was concerned that the scheme was isolated from other processes such as the Annual Programme Review (APR) and external examiners reports, both of which identified staff development needs that should be discussed as part of the staff review.

A third HOS talked about the difficulty of appointing suitable reviewers:

In terms of peoples different roles in relation to Learning & Teaching, Research, Enterprise and Development, we find that most staff have an involvement in all three areas and therefore it is difficult to align senior staff to specific areas e.g. all staff involved in L&T. To this end, you get an eclectic mixture of reviewers and allocated staff! (SMGHOSM12).

Two of the HOSs were in agreement that the line management arrangements did not contribute to the smooth operation of the scheme:

I've been Director for Learning and Teaching for about five years, and I really have real difficulties in that I've got real responsibilities,
but no line management power. So I was expected to do and change and implement and develop and all that but I didn't have the line management. So I can only ask for the directors to do things but I can't tell them…..Again, the course directors manage a team and they don't have any line management, so that when they do a timetable for example or they try to produce some changes to the course they can only ask. But I mean implementation is really difficult. I mean in my school we had so many agreed procedures and processes, but implementation was very, very poor because there is no line management or they can't tell people what to do… (SMGHOSM15)

Other methods of measuring and managing individual performance included: occasionally attending other people’s lectures “attending other peoples lectures in the school is not hugely common or widespread partly because people are busy and partly because of a slight reluctance to be invasive” (SMGHOSM14); appointing the right people in the first place “I find that most staff within the school are personally, professionally and academically driven. It’s about getting square pegs in square holes – or round pegs in round holes (whichever!”) (SMGHOSM12), having the right criteria in place and allowing people the space and responsibility to be able to make improvements. One HOS also thought it was important to be positive and encourage interactive relationships “I try to be very positive about staff and I try to make some comment about performance all the time e.g. fantastic, excellent, because then if something gets worse, it’s easier to say well this isn’t up to your normal performance” (SMGHOSF17).

6.5.2 HOUs and Individual Performance

Seven out of nine HOUs reported the use of the SRDS as a means of measuring and managing individual performance. They made use of objectives and targets within this process although one HOU admitted that we: “are not
very good at making them SMART” (SMGHOUM1). For another HOU, the performance of individuals was managed mainly through the day-to-day management activities:

I have six people reporting directly to me and each of those has their own action plans with a set of objectives which I use to monitor performance – not in a tick box way but in a way that I know that certain individuals are working on certain priorities. The team knows that and the organisation knows that and through weekly team meetings, we monitor progress against that. It isn’t as simple as saying we look at each objective and each bit within that objective every single week, it doesn’t work that way because priorities change. What I want to do is look at the picture over a longer period of time. (SMGHOUM6).

Five HOUs also stated that they used meetings as another way of managing individual performance, “other performance measures are individual meetings with the people I line manage – it basically tells me whether they think they are doing well and also when they think they are not doing so well!” (SMGHOUM7) and one HOU has attributed their briefing process to the Investors in People process - “Because of Investors in People we now have a monthly senior managers meeting and then a half hour feedback session following that to all staff. I have noticed that staff feel more included and therefore make more contribution” (SMGHOUM3).

One HOU talked about the importance of involving staff in the process of target setting:

I think getting staff to understand the targets and understand the importance of achieving them is key. The biggest thing about measuring is having clarity of what it is we are trying to achieve and then getting staff to understand it. That to me is how you measure and manage performance – and by discussing it on a regular basis (SMGHOUF9).
Another HOU advocated focusing on individual development linked to the job role as a way of engaging with staff so that they can get more out of the role.

Torrington *et al.* (2002) recommend that employee performance can be managed informally as part of everyday management activities following a simple three step approach involving Planning performance, Supporting performance and Reviewing performance (similar to the IiP principles of Plan, Do and Review). There is some evidence that the SMG are applying these principles, although the HOSs identified that the line management arrangements and accountabilities (for example Programme Directors) did not assist in managing individual performance. These difficulties have also been highlighted by PCS Ltd., (2002), McCaffery (2004), Chambers (2005), and Huxley (2005).

HOSs and HOUs support performance by taking on an enabling role and encourage staff to talk through their training and development requirements as part of the review process, including, reflecting on what went well (or not so well) and why. Some also take time to improve their communication channels through regular feedback sessions. There is however, no specific mention of coaching and mentoring as a means of supporting performance.

In terms of reviewing performance, Thompson *et al.* (2006, p.26) specifically recommend that “organisations have their own bespoke performance frameworks which are tailored to the focus and goals of the organisation” (Breakthrough six: find your own framework). 50% of the HOSs mentioned UL’s
Staff Performance Review scheme as a vehicle for managing individual performance compared with 77% of HOUs. Others spoke of maintaining regular contact through one-to-one and team meetings and revisiting the staff review and development objectives. Interestingly, managers who are in charge of smaller areas often cite this as an advantage when managing individual performance, for example (SMGHOSM12).

6.6 MANAGING UNDERPERFORMANCE

HOSs and HOUs were asked to explain how they manage underperformance.

6.6.1 Methods Deployed by the HOUs

The majority of HOUs reported that they tried to intervene at the earliest opportunity, for example: “hopefully, there are early indications if someone is underperforming and that’s where the counselling comes in to find out why – there may be some valid reasons” (SMGHOUM1); First of all I would discuss any underperformance issues with the manager and keep a record or log of the difficulties (SMGHOUM4); I usually raise it with them to see if that changes it – bring it to their attention is my view. If you hide it, then it’s not going to go away is my experience so far (SMGHOUM7).

Several HOUs took a more proactive approach to managing underperformance stating that “The starting point is having proper objectives and standards in place so that the individual knows what is expected. Underperformance would come to my attention either by those objectives not being met for a good reason - and there may be a good reason - or it could be because of capability, laziness what ever” (SMGHOUM6).
Additional ways of managing performance were also spoken of and one HOU talked about the importance of encouraging feedback from other sources:

…..I might be assured that performance is good when actually I am getting feedback to the contrary so that’s why I encourage feedback from other sources, primarily 2nd and 3rd tier staff because HR is here to assist them, rather than individual members of staff who probably don’t like a lot of the things we do, but then we are not here to be liked and we don’t care! (SMGHOUM6).

Whilst another advocated a rather more unusual management tool:

I think you need to have a set of reigns - and this is a bad analogy - but the reigns need to be like one of those retractable dog leads – long enough and flexible enough that the person doesn’t even know they are on a lead but where you are able to push a button and reel them in if necessary (SMGHOUM5).

Several HOUs mentioned the use of formal procedures “We then have procedures in place which lay out a framework for dealing with poor performance – what to improve and how and within what timescales” (SMGHOUM1) and “Then if things don’t improve we would use the capability procedure” (SMGHOUM4). One HOU made reference to involving HR in the process.

6.6.1.1 The Difficulties of Managing Performance Issues

One particular HOU was concerned that despite having corporate procedures available, HOUs were all following their own processes and that there needed to be some management training or templates on how to deal with issues consistently across UL:

– we’re all doing our own things far too much without standard procedures – we ought to have standard letters that go out if for example you’ve got cumulative absences – we’re all writing our own letters and unsure about things and we’re tippy toeing around, scared of doing the wrong thing. Every manager is doing things
differently – we need a corporate stance. There’s a big cultural barrier to get over (SMGHOUF9).

However, one HOU was certain that the problem of dealing with performance was actually a non-compliance issue, stating that “The real problem is that no one wants to take any action. You can all be told to do something and 50% of you comply but nothing happens to the other 50% that don’t comply. There’s a real non-compliance issue” (SMGHOUM4). Whilst not meeting objectives, laziness, too little work to do and too much work to do were all mentioned as examples of underperformance, one manager observed “We haven’t had much experience of underperformance over the years, if anything its sickness that is the problem because they are not here to do the work!” (SMGHOUM3).

6.6.2 Methods Deployed by the HOSs

Three HOSs stated that they have never had to go down the capability route with any of their staff, and one HOS stated that managing underperformance with some staff was impossible – “Sometimes you can’t, especially with staff that are cynical and disengaged” (SMGHOSM13). For the other HOSs, where there were issues of underperformance, they would “bring them in for a coffee and a chat. I try to identify the issues and also try to determine if they see it as an issue” (SMGHOSM12). However, for the majority of HOSs, managing underperformance seemed problematic.

6.6.2.1 The Difficulties of Managing Performance Issues

One HOS talked about the lack of UL’s line management arrangements as a barrier to managing performance:
You’ve got the Head of School who is the only one with any authority, the Directors of…. don’t see themselves as managers in that sense, so there is no sort of management responsibility. The whole nature of academic work varies – it’s not necessarily a team thing - it can be, but not always - and people can feel quite isolated. Just because someone isn’t at their desk doesn’t mean they are not working – it also doesn’t mean they are working! A lecturer can go in and as long as you keep the kids happy no one will know there’s a problem. So the line management issue is a problem and I think line managers need much more support, much more training in relation to performance management around a model of performance management that is UL’s model. I mean you get your Hitlers and soft soaps and all sorts of things but what does UL want from its managers? (SMGHOSF17).

However there appeared, at least in one school, to be a much more deep rooted problem concerning the management of underperformance, which is told very aptly by the HOS in their own words:

Well basically, there’s a long tradition within UL of doing bugger all about it! – you give that person a lower timetable, as much training as possible, every opportunity to improve themselves, you tell them they have to improve themselves – and sometimes that’s terribly difficult on a personal level. I mean I have a colleague who I’ve worked on for three years who has now confronted most of her/his demons and there are still two demons that we are going to start work on now for this year. Getting rid of those two, she will, at pushing 60, make a reasonable teacher which is a shame isn’t it? But then again, this person wants to go on until she is 65 so over the next five years we can expect back some better performance which will make herself and the students a lot happier. I’ve got another, who’s got a terrible reputation amongst students – which is probably not fully justified – and she is getting better rapidly, but I have put her under a fair bit of pressure, but she’s certainly putting in a lot of effort. I’ve got a third person who is really a hopeless case. She is dim in everything, she has done a lot of training and she thinks the world of herself as a teacher, big difficulty turning up at the right time to meet the students, obviously hasn’t got a clue as to what she should be doing, doesn’t differentiate in the marks she gives students. Now, she has worked for two Deans and a Head and no one has ever confronted it – it’s the same policy, minimise her teaching. But I have confronted her and it’s not easy, because to a certain extent it’s very cruel to suddenly say after all these years you’re rubbish and the students think you’re rubbish – and they do, they move to other people’s modules because they can’t stand being taught by her and they don’t understand where
her arguments are going because her brain isn’t functioning. I bloody despair about this place I must say. I am in the process of confronting her but I think it’s a total competency issue and we probably ought to sack her. I don’t want to sack her, I would much rather it hadn’t got to this stage and been left for so many years (SMGHOSM14).

An underlying theme that emerged from within the schools is a notion of working on a principle of trust. This principle of trust appears to have replaced any day-to-day management arrangements, resulting in some individuals who, either due to personal or other circumstances have been unable to cope and this has not been noticed until it has become a problem. The following vignettes serve to illustrate this point:

I’ve had one other case, where retrospectively we’ve found out that systems within a particular programme were not as we would have liked them and unfortunately we found out about them during an end of season review and exam board, and that was because the person had a whole series of baggage and was unable to cope with everything that was going on….and you could say that that was my fault because we hadn’t monitored it closely enough, but it’s because we work on a principal of trust. And we know that that person is a competent, highly intelligent, articulate person and yet one or two circumstances combined to cause this situation – and I had asked him about certain things, but I never followed it through (SMGHOSM10).

….in both these situations, there have been personal reasons or whatever. But what makes it most difficult is when someone doesn’t actually communicate that in the first instance. For instance, if someone comes in and says I’ve got a terrible problem I’ve got ‘blah blah blah,’ I can put mechanisms in place and we can sort it out, but when people start to avoid all that and the system falls down, then that’s when its drawn to my attention (SMGHOSM11).

If someone has not met their deadlines I need to determine if they are being slack or they are actually too busy to achieve them because of the other commitments and workloads they actually have. Sometimes targets are not met because an individual has a personal goal that they have prioritised over meeting UL or school objectives e.g. marking is late because of other commitments (SMGHOS12).
Often it’s about clarity of goals and if I feel someone isn’t performing then I feel that I haven’t set the goals clearly and I don’t like that confrontational side of things. That’s why I try to invest a lot on the positive side, but for those that I can’t establish an interaction with…. I mean I want to intervene, but it’s almost gone too far and if I don’t know how to retrieve the situation, then it almost gets to be disciplinary before….. (SMGHOSF17).

Team Technology (2008) point out that although the underlying principles for managing performance (both good and poor) are the same, the formality and consequences for dealing with different types of performance can be very different and UL’s SMG appear to be calling for training and development in this area.

HOUs appear to have some understanding of dealing with issues of underperformance and there is some evidence of them trying to be more proactive about preventing underperformance, through ensuring that expectations are established at the outset. There appears to be some monitoring of performance in place and several HOUs were aware of UL’s formal procedures for dealing with poor performance, for example, the capability procedure. One HOU also points out that there is a non-compliance issue with around 50% of managers which is not dealt with by their managers.

In contrast to the HOUs, the HOSs appear less up to speed with dealing with issues of underperformance. Whilst the majority would try and “bring them in for a coffee and a chat” they seemed at the same time, to be weighed down with long traditions of not dealing with issues, exacerbated by poor line management arrangements and a highly held principle of working on trust that appears to make it difficult to put in place and operate any robust day-to-day
management systems and practices such as setting objectives, monitoring and reviewing performance against objectives and giving feedback on performance. Issues of underperformance are often discovered it seems, once a crisis (personal or operational) has emerged.

6.7 RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

SMG members were asked how they recruited the best candidates rather than the second best. Of equal importance for HOSs is the recruitment of students onto programmes.

6.7.1 Recruitment and Selection from the HOSs Perspective

Recruitment and Selection is not an exact science and prompts a variety of viewpoints. Several HOSs spoke about the importance of exacting your requirements early on in the process, by talking to the relevant people involved – for example, for an academic programme “with the programme leader to say, what do we want”? (SMGHOSM10). One HOS thought it would be beneficial to have more HR support and guidance on how to conduct a thorough job analysis and then translate that into the person specification.

Of equal importance to one HOS, was how the product i.e. the programmes were marketed and sold to potential students so that they were able to attract the best and most competent students. The HOS described some of the tactics that they employed:
We have school based open days - 14 last year - and invite over 1000 students. The basic rule is that if you don’t attend an open day we won’t make you an offer. We figure that if potential students do not attend our open days, then UL has not figured in their top three choices. As a school, we also set high levels of achievement in relation to recruitment of students, so we ask for at least two B’s or better. Psychologically, students think oh God this must be a really good course. If we offered a few C’s and D’s, students would feel that the course did not hold any value i.e. anyone can get onto this course. We ensure that on open days etc. we have the best presenters up front. We also have current students showing prospective students around which means that the prospective students get first hand information. This of course means that we need to ensure our current students feel they are getting a good deal and feel they are valued – it’s word of mouth (SMGHOSM12).

Other marketing ploys utilised, involved selling the value added benefits such as the City life and the facilities, although as one HOS said “part of the job is probably already done for us in terms of reputation” (SMGHOSM11).

One HOS described UL’s advertising style as dull “(it) doesn’t set the world alight – its very old hat”! (SMGHOSM10). It was also felt that there was a need for a better understanding of the importance of using specialist advertising and making sure that the right journals were being used. Failure to do so, warned one HOS, caused unnecessary delays and expense and resulted in having to re-advertise later in the year:

…..we always end up having to go back to re-advertise therefore that causes a delay and delays are expensive. When we couldn’t appoint to the course director, we had to drop in Cornelius Fudge and then the course didn’t recruit well and we were down to the tune of £80,000 so in terms of recruiting the right person, you know, again it’s about results – we’ve saved a couple of quid in the first instance through not advertising in the right place, but haven’t appointed as a result (SMGHOSM13).
Two HOSs identified particular areas that were difficult to recruit to. One found it difficult when trying to attract candidates from the health profession (as they traditionally earn more in the health sector) and the other HOS struggled to attract good researchers stating that:

*Ideally you would want to attract those from a 4 or 5* rated institution and then get them to come to a 3* unit with potential for growth! In order to do that, you need the flexibility to bend the rules a bit, for example, providing a good salary package with no teaching. We tend to find that applicants are either disenchanted with their current circumstances or are playing out their swan song.*  
(SMGHOSM12)

HOSs discussed some of their recruitment and selection practices, including not tending to score the candidates (SMGHOSM14), sending personal e-mails to other universities to invite students who might be looking for a job (SMGHOSM15) and:

*….often, what we have done in the past is that we have a person in mind and we’ve sort of head hunted people for certain jobs, and then we’ve made sure that the job description and the key competencies actually fit that person – I know I shouldn’t be saying this to you! – but we’ve done that and you’re not telling me that that doesn’t happen in industry……and I think we’ve got a good panel and we all ask fairly probing questions in different ways and we have a feel between the three of us of the type of person we want and very quickly, as you go through an interview, you say ‘Well what do you think?’ And it’s not so much that they’ve got the skills or the knowledge or understanding, it’s will they fit? Are they the right person for this organisation, this culture, this school?*  
(SMGHOSM10).

### 6.7.2. Recruitment and Selection from the HOUs Perspective

Although there were one or two glib comments in response to the question, such as ‘*oh pot luck!*’ seven of the nine HOUs recognised the importance of scrutinizing and analysing the requirements of the job and making sure that the job and person specification was fit for purpose. As one HOU said, “you don’t
just want to go out for more of the same” (SMGHOUF9). Several examples were given where this had not happened previously and jobs had been re-advertised despite not fully satisfying the requirements of the department. But notwithstanding every care and effort being made, one HOU was concerned about the inexact science of the whole recruitment and selection process stating:

I mean I go all through the procedures to the best of my ability, for example, I spend a lot of time preparing the person specs, job descriptions etc. etc. and some have turned out to be brilliant and some have turned out to be pretty bad. I'm not convinced I've yet hit upon a psychic recruitment mechanism.....and that's where I was coming from earlier.... It's not that I don't follow the procedures or don't try to do it as accurately as possible, but people can...you know, you use all the usual things, presentations, interviews, written things, you use all the indicators you can, references....but it's still not scientific because some people are very, very good at presenting themselves and the reality of themselves is not the way they present themselves.... and the opposite to that is also sometimes true. Some people just can not present themselves well, but they're excellent, very competent people and they just can not present themselves...I've got some of my staff that can't present themselves that I know are good....umm but they just can't do it. So there's an issue about whether we can make it any more scientific? - if we can? (SMGHOUM7).

Another HOU was convinced that you didn't always get the best candidate and that sometimes you had to be prepared to compromise.

HOU's also raised concerns regarding the interview process. One commented on the importance of “having the right mixture of people on the interview panel so that you can make an appropriate offer – some of our work is quite morphous and it's important that people can have an idea about what you are looking for” (SMGHOUM5). Others discussed their concern about selecting people with the right personality – “I've got to be looking for the personality as
well as the skills” (SMGHOUF8); “You’ve also got to sort of have a view about how the individual would sort of fit into the department and be able to work with others not only within the department but with others outside of the department as well” (SMGHOUM3) and “actually it’s often the devil you know is better than the devil you don’t know” (SMGHOUM4).

One HOU described the selection process as having a “gut feeling” reporting:

Do you want the honest answer? We interview, I select the right person and I mark your interviewing sheets to reflect the person I want. Yeah. I mean I think since I’ve been here I’ve never had any problems. The trouble with scoring is…… at the moment you are supposed to score as you go along and the theory is that at the end of the process you select the person with the best score – I mean it’s exactly the same as starting a tendering exercise, but the reality is…..in my department anyway, I can teach them the skills, but what I need is the personality and the lateral thinking, that’s what I need. So, I will choose somebody who I feel has the personality and the thought processes that fits in with the team because you can teach the skills but you can't teach lateral thinking and you can’t teach personality and it’s the same with tendering. We always put a load of criteria in – ‘it will not be a pile of shit, it will be best value’ and so on, but the reality is that what you are doing is giving yourself sufficient scope to maneuver your way around so that you get – and it’s probably a bit of a gut feeling – you end up with what you feel is probably the most appropriate choice given the selection (SMGHOUM2).

Another HOU was less sure of the “gut feeling” approach advocating instead “if you’re not sure, then don’t appoint” (SMGHOUF9), explaining that it was not easy to get rid of anyone - even during the probation period - once you had made the appointment.

Three HOUs made reference to following HR processes “I mean it’s just sort of following your standard sort of HR process in a sense. You know, trying to
avoid bias at that stage, you know if there’s any sort of subjectivity err, trying to avoid that” (SMGHOUM3).

The literature purports that the world class reputation of HEIs depends upon their ability to attract, recruit and retain high quality staff. Recruitment and Selection is therefore a critical activity, not just for HR but increasingly line managers who have the main responsibility for the process. It is a highly complex process which requires careful planning and attention to the different stages – job specification, job and person specifications, attracting and managing applications, selecting candidates, making the appointment and joining the organisation. Equalities issues also need to be taken into consideration throughout the process so that selection is based on objective criteria rather than gut feeling or instinct.

Some HOSs identified difficulties in recruiting to particular subject areas such as the health professions (UCEA, 2005), indicating that some managers were looking beyond the perimeter fence. Some also mentioned the need to put more investment into advertising in the right journals in order to attract the right people.

Both HOSs and HOUs were aware of the importance of spending time exacting the requirements of the job, job description and person specification. However, there was no evidence or sense that managers were aware of the overall cost of the recruitment and selection exercise, especially in terms of getting it wrong. The impact of a badly chosen appointment on a school or unit can be significant
both in financial and emotional terms (Thomson, 2002), as can a claim of direct or indirect discrimination (Equal Opportunities Commission, 2007). There was no reference made by managers to employment legislation, but examples of “gut feelings”, filling out the scores after the event and writing job descriptions around a preferred person were given, indicating that although some HOU and HOS talk about following HR policy and procedure, the reality might be different.

6.8 INDUCTION

HOSs and HOU were asked to describe the Induction processes they currently had in place to ensure that new members of staff were fully aware of the school/unit and UL’s expectations in terms of performance.

6.8.1 Inducting Staff in the Units

One HOU (probably because of his position) was well-appraised of UL’s corporate induction processes “Well, we have a wonderful corporate induction package! Both through CD-ROM and hard copy, we have a wonderful process for managers to follow in terms of using that” (SMGHOUM6). The reality for other HOU however was somewhat different, with admissions of not putting the policy into practice “Umm haphazard I think would be the word I’d use!” (SMGHOUM2) and “Umm right, that’s probably something we are a little bit weak in. I think we are now looking to have some more formal induction processes – that was something that came out of our LiP review” (SMGHOUM3).
Two HOU’s spoke of their delegated induction arrangements. One of them talked about using the corporate induction pack together with an extensive list, going on to say:

*I also appoint a responsible person for the induction of a person and say this is what you have to cover starting with workplace assessment, like people you need to see, procedures they need to know, financial regulations, Agresso, Health and Safety – and it is set out over a period so you’ve got day 1, week 1, week 2 etc over a 3 month period and the induction gradually expands in its complexity if you like. I also interview the new person myself after a couple of weeks to make sure things have been covered and to find out if there is anything they need* (SMGHOUM1).

And the other described how each of the line managers in their section had adapted the induction checklist to suit their own local arrangements albeit “almost impossible in catering with people starting and finishing and what have you in terms of that, but they’ve all got induction processes in place which identify the key things they’ve got to cover” (SMGHOUF9). There was also a central monitoring system in place to make sure that the induction process was being carried out.

In another section they operated a generic induction process, appointing an individual to be responsible for showing new starters the layout of the campus and how to operate the systems. However, the HOU did not appear to connect performance and induction stating that:

*I’m not sure that induction is that much about performance…certainly we don’t treat it that way, now maybe that’s wrong I don’t know. I mean we treat induction to try and make the person fit in and know about the systems they need to use in order to operate at whatever performance level…hopefully at a good performance level. But if you can’t operate, you can’t do anything… but we don’t really look at ‘this is what you need to do in terms of performance’. We do take them through – I think – the staff review and development but I don’t think we see it as a
performance enhancing function, we see it more as a getting up to speed of operating function (SMGHOUUM7).

6.8.2 Inducting Staff in the Schools

The academic approach to induction revealed that several models were in place. Four HOSs described some fairly structured induction processes which included providing information on the background of the school and any future developments, discussions about the line management arrangements, allocating a mentor and making sure that all the basic amenities were available. One HOS included a mini teaching and learning ‘top tips’ session as part of the guided tour and another HOS (together with their Heads of Centre), used the Corporate Induction booklet and followed the checklist to make sure that there were no gaps in the induction process.

Other HOSs had less developed induction processes in place with two HOSs content that most aspects of the job role had already been covered thoroughly either at interview or just prior to the contract being signed:

Well I think it starts at the interview, so at the interview, we will spend about an hour talking about where they would be expected to work and what are the different departments etc. the workload, the lab, all of these things. Now when they are selected we would then invite them again, before they sign the contract, we invite them to have a chat and talk about the job, about the subject they’re going to teach, the workload, what facilities we can offer them, computing at home (SMGHOSM15).

After which, methods appeared to become rather less structured:

And then when they sign the contract, I take them and introduce them to other members of staff and I send an e-mail with their CV, well a brief introduction of their experience to all staff and wish
them good luck. And we’ve got an induction package I think – it’s from the human resources and we give them that (SMGHOSM15).

We would have talked about that at interview so we would know exactly what we want from the person and they would know what they want from us. So very quickly, after a couple of weeks, I would tend to just drop in and say is everything OK? Teaching alright? Structured research, support? etc. (SMGHOSM10).

OK it’s pretty unstructured but they do get to have a chat and the length of it rather depends on the person. There are some people who would happily spend all morning with you and some people who are quite happy just to get on with it, in which case, you say if there are no questions, then there’s the lavatory and there’s the canteen….(SMGHOSM14).

The literature asserts that inefficient and unorganised approaches to staff induction account for at least a week of dead-time when employees join an organisation and are the cause of 19% of people leaving organisations within the first six months.

There was evidence from both HOSs and HOUs of some strong induction processes being in place, for example, the use of corporate induction checklists, mini teaching and learning top tips sessions, allocations of mentors or responsible persons, guided tours and demonstrations of systems and processes. At the same time, there was evidence from both HOSs and HOUs of some weaker methodologies such as “I would tend to just drop in and say is everything OK”, or “If there are no questions then there’s the lavatory and there’s the canteen...” with some HOUs admitting that they had haphazard or weak induction processes in place. There was little or no mention of covering important topics such as performance and training, standards and rules, health and safety, and terms and conditions as described by Rankin (2004).
6.9 PROBATION

HOSs and HOUs were asked how they ensured that new staff in their school/unit meet their probationary requirements?

6.9.1 Observations from HOUs Practice

Six of the nine HOUs had some processes in place during the probationary period:

_Ummm regular communication, regular talking – I do the formal, you know the formal paperwork meetings as well, yeah? So that’s in addition to just checking that everything is OK and that there aren’t any issues from the outset. I always try to programme in those meetings at the intervals – programme in any dates so that they are aware of those and then HR is there as a catch all if there are any serious issues_ (SMGHOUF8).

However, there was no sense of any systematic or consistent approach across the organisation with one HOU explaining:

_It’s difficult to quantify isn’t it? You know, I have my standards and I have what I want from people and I suppose I have this sort of mental view of, well by this time you should be able to do this and by this time you should be able to do that. Is there a black and white? The reality is, no. It’s a value judgement on my part to be quite honest. There needs to be something more concrete if you feel they are going to fail their probation, but I mean if everything is going wonderfully then it’s not a problem!_ (SMGHOUM2).

Overall, HOUs did not appear confident in their processes for managing probation stating variously: “I’m not sure we do that very well…I think we do induction better than probation if I’m honest about it” (SMGHOUM7); “right umm, well again this is something that we perhaps need to tighten up on” (SMGHOUM3); “Well to tell you the truth Allison, that really is a matter of filling
Another manager explained:

*We did have a problem with sort of one individual who had a few problems with the sickness, but he eventually just left and never came back and after a period of time you...his contract was terminated, but that wasn’t a failure of probation in that sense, but I mean I suppose it could have been, if we had been looking at it a bit more closely...perhaps we need to* (SMGHOUM3).

Some HOUs delegated the task to their managers “the responsibility is upon the manager to make sure that it happens, that there is an evaluation happening at the different stages” (SMGHOUM1), whilst others were reliant upon HR to prompt them:

*I mean I did get a prompt from HR – and the prompts have to come from HR - I think that has to be a statutory responsibility of HR. Yes, managers should remember etc. etc. but you’re the backstop – a quiet reminder a couple of weeks before the review is due* (SMGHOUM5).

One HOU was concerned that UL did not allow any qualification based training during the first year of employment and another was concerned that the six month probation period was not long enough to assess someone effectively at senior officer level.

### 6.9.2 Observations from HOSs Practice

Probationary arrangements in the schools were practically non-existent. One HOS suggested that it would require a much more explicit statement of what was required, but that it was very difficult to get hard data “I mean with an academic, can they actually stand up and give a lecture? Well you don’t know unless you’re there do you? And then it might not suit you, but might suit
"everybody else" (SMGHOSF17). Another HOS suggested that although they had informal processes in place "to be quite honest we are confident at the time of appointment and I have only had one problem in ten years. They then added "I suppose in areas like Sports Facilities it becomes a more important process" (SMGHOSM12) and another HOS gave a very frank account of what he thought of probation:

In a very, very ad hoc way – it’s like a Sword of Damocles hanging over ones head for any young person coming in. I mean I remember when I got down to the last stage of interviews for the Azkaban job, they sort of said at the interview ‘You will of course realise that only after your probation will the job be confirmed’. Well, you either want me or you don’t want me – make me jump through probationary hoops then you can forget it! But it was the notion of what their interpretation was of probation – If I didn’t absolutely cut the mustard, they would use that as a way to exit me! That would be the impression I got. So I don’t like the whole notion of probation – I think it’s not learning organisation stuff. I mean you get someone in, you go through a whole series of processes – they like you, you like them, right, OK, fine, and if there are some rough edges to that person along the way, then we’re duty bound to look after that person and grow them a bit. So I mean, I think probation sympathetically handled is….but we don’t have a very good system for probation here, I mean I don’t manage anything like a proper probationary system – actually, what it was and how it should happen, I couldn’t tell you! (SMGHOSM10).

Contracts of employment are usually subject to meeting certain criteria, of which the probationary period is one. Employees have a responsibility to demonstrate acceptable levels of performance, but employers must make clear their expectations, set reasonable objectives and provide training and development and supervision to assist them in doing this. The probationary period is also a time for employees to appraise the organisation. Issues of poor performance should be rare if sufficient attention has been given to the recruitment and selection and induction processes, but in worse case scenarios, employers may
be caused to dismiss on the grounds of capability and qualifications, conduct, redundancy, illegality or contravention of a statutory duty or SOSR. In doing so, they must follow statutory procedures or an Employment Tribunal will find the dismissal ‘unfair’.

Even though some form filling does take place when prompted, there is little evidence that HOSs and HOUs fully understand the implications of the probation period particularly in relation to communicating performance expectations and monitoring progress. This is a missed opportunity for both managers and new staff.

6.10 STAFF REVIEW

Respondents were asked to assess whether they considered the SRDS (SRDS) to be: fully integrated; used annually but with further developments necessary; not used frequently enough; or not used at all.

6.10.1 HOUs and Staff Review

Four HOUs thought that the SRDS was fully integrated into their unit, four thought it was used annually but with further developments necessary and one HOU was of the opinion that because of their existing day-to-day management practices, is was rather an add-on that they would “need to dovetail” into (SMGHOUM5).

Two HOUs mentioned liP as being critical to the integration of the SRDS which was described as: “used annually but also with mid-term assessments – I don’t
think we would have got liP without it. I mean to be honest, I think we’ve gone further than the scheme because we’ve introduced things like learning logs and all that kind of stuff” (SMGHOUM2).

6.10.1.1 Developmental Areas

Some HOUs were of the opinion that further developments in the SRDS were necessary. One HOU was trying to introduce a system whereby all his managers were able to see the review documents, so that as a ‘management team’ they would be better placed to monitor objectives cascading downwards and development requirements coming upwards, as well as making sure that all staff were involved:

…it’s easier for some (members of staff) because now they’re involved in and know the process, but when you start getting out to the fringes and again, I don’t like to home in on the DLO, but they say ‘what’s all this rubbish?’ ….So I try and meet them more often, to get them involved and have been doing so for a while, to get them to see that in fact it’s not rubbish, it’s not just for me it’s for them as well, that they’re involved in the process and trying to get them to think about performance themselves…so that’s been difficult…that’s the development bit – it’s getting that interaction (SMGHOUM1).

Another HOU was trying to ensure that individual or team performance measured against the objectives set at review was monitored on a more regular basis, as part of the day-to-day management practices:

I carry out management monitoring via management, not via the staff review and development, that’s why I said if I had a problem with someone’s performance, I would bring it to their attention, but it wouldn’t be as part of the staff review and development scheme – it would be as part of managing them…..(SMGHOUM7).
6.10.1.2 Difficulties in Operating the Scheme

There were a number issues raised about the operation of the scheme. One HOU was of the opinion that it was easier to measure performance at a higher level, for example meeting budgets, programmes and times, but when it came to appraising the more detailed individual performance, it became more complicated, especially when you were appraising trade staff such as carpenters or electricians. These staff generally tended to be measured as a group as it was not considered cost effective to measure them individually using individual 'man hours' as a performance measure. The HOU was adamant that he had never found any appraisal system that was successful, outlining some of the reasons:

> we had all sorts of bonus schemes introduced …..but within four years of introducing them, ….it was absolved. It became totally non cost effective to monitor it, measure it. You had more people measuring than you had people doing the work! And then you think well this is the 80:20 rule, you know, we’re spending 80 per cent of the effort to get 20 of a return, you know! It’s just not cost effective to do that at that level. And it’s got to be cost effective, whatever appraisal system you put in. It’s a bit like space charging or capitol charging or whatever – you can end up with an army of staff implementing the thing…what are you getting out of it in the end? …there’s got to be a reward in this appraisal hasn’t there? (SMGHOUM1).

Another HOU questioned the relevance of the scheme to some roles "Well it’s fully integrated in that every member of staff has a review, but I wouldn’t say that it is equally useful for all members of staff to be honest”. He went on to explain that a lot of the work in the unit is repetitive and therefore you tend to monitor what you are doing through out the course of the year “rather than having a little snapshot as it were when you do the appraisal in October or December or whenever it is”. This therefore, makes the scheme more useful to
some members of staff than it does for others, dependent upon the nature of the job. The HOU also pointed out that if staff have an issue that they would like to raise, then they are encouraged to do so at the time it arises, and not as part of an annual process. They did however think that the scheme was more useful at a more senior level:

> you know at my level or Hermione’s level, Professor Sprout’s level – that sort of level whereby Professor Slughorn has been given sort of new sort of objectives or whatever, which he is then cascading down – you know it’s about moving forward – every year there’s something different in my appraisal and there’s things we can talk about like what worked well and what hasn’t and so forth, but the lower down the scale you get, the less there is of that sort of change (SMGHOUM3).

Another HOU, felt it was important that the process was linked to the operational plan, otherwise people could get a bit cynical about it. He also thought that it could get slightly repetitious with maintenance objectives “and I think it’s a problem if it’s just going through the motions” (SMGHOUM4).

6.10.1.3 Identification of Training and Development Needs

The majority of the HOUs found that the staff review and development process was effective in identifying training and development needs “because it gives a focus for it” (SMGHOUM6), but as one HOU pointed out “that’s a standard question every year, but if we didn’t have the appraisal process we would still have the learning and development needs – you’d just do it by a different means” (SMGHOUM3).
6.10.1.4 Appraising Staff Performance

Although UL’s SRDS was intended to be developmental in nature, when it came to appraising staff against their performance objectives, there appeared to be informal systems in place across the units. As one HOU explained:

…..in effect we do have that formal process of appraisal within HR – it does exist – we don’t call it that, we call it performance objective setting, but within that, it’s explicit that individuals have their own targets, standards to be met, so therefore that gives me the framework for appraising whether they are or aren’t meeting that. But I think it’s important to keep that formally separate from the staff review and development scheme – the commonality are the objectives, the objectives sit in the middle – your objectives are this; to achieve those you may need this level of input in terms of training, development, whatever, it could be anything yeah, so that the outputs are, are you successfully achieving the objectives at the end of the review period - which is the same as the staff development review as an annual period yeah? So quite simplistically I think it does exist – performance management does exist within the organisation we just haven’t articulated it properly or fully yet and that’s one of our next objectives in HR to try and do that (SMGHOUM6).

6.10.2 HOSs and Staff Review

Two HOSs thought that the SRDS was somewhere between fully integrated into their school and used annually but with further developments necessary and five HOSs thought it was used annually but with further developments necessary.

6.10.2.1 Developmental Areas

For those who thought that further developments were necessary, a number of areas were mentioned:

I think it needs to be slimmed down a bit. The discussions list is useful, but it can be too much. It is more useful to get people to identify their role and map out how they see it developing, a mix
between developmental review and setting of tasks and goals (SMGHOSM12).

The liP advisors said that they would like us to look at the way in which we review the budget implications of Staff Development Review – you know, you get a paucity of money and then I work creatively to support people - and they said, yes you do that, but you don’t actually know how much it costs you do you? (SMGHOSM10).

I think that we’ve adjusted the timing of the different bits to make it all align and work better, but I think that alignment with the management structures would help and I think that there needs to be an extension of the management and the devolvement to line management roles within the schools (SMGHOSF17).

Another HOS was concerned about the difficulties of trying to link all the requirements together so that there was some cohesion between the Welsh Assembly Government objectives, Estyn Inspections and UL’s requirements of increasing the research profile and gaining RDAPs:

I think we need to get the corporate objectives out there and then we need to look at those, in terms of the school development plan and ensuring that those are as closely matched as they can be ....well it’s the agenda for staff development and review. And it’s got to be tightly linked in somewhere,…and one of the things I’ve brought in, is applications for staff development otherwise people would just….can I go on this course? Can I go on that course?...and we have clearly articulated why they are going, what the benefit is to their course, what other courses have they been on this academic year, how has that helped to impact on their performance (SMGHOSM11).

6.10.2.2 Difficulties in Operating the Scheme

There were a number of difficulties identified by the HOSs when it came to operating the scheme. One HOS identified difficulties with the existing management arrangements suggesting that it should be layers of people within the school who were responsible for assessing performance “That’s the way it
used to work in the University of Gryffindor before I came here. For example the Professors would look at the Senior Lecturers and Senior Lectures would look at the Lecturers and so on” (SMGHOSM15). The lack of tracking of an agreed plan was also of concern to the HOS because it allowed people the opportunity to “wriggle out” of the review process “I mean it’s not only people at our school but also in other schools, they say they just stick in last years staff review form, change the date and get the HOS to sign it” (SMGHOSM15). For another, there was the problem of the one or two people who always managed to dodge being developed “so long as timetables exist and staff aren’t on a 40 hour week to be in attendance the whole time. People will always find some excuses not to make the carefully arranged appointment” (SMGHOSM14), whilst in another school, different review arrangements were invited “… what we decided to do, was that rather than say everyone has to have a mid-term review, was that all those who were reviewing would email staff and ask them if they would like one – which I did and only three wanted one” (SMGHOSF16).

6.10.2.3 Identification of Training and Development Needs

The majority of the HOSs were able to identify training and development needs through the staff review and development process, although as one HOS pointed out “Staff Review involves a lot of negotiation and persuasion, for example, you can do a, b or c but I also want you to do x, y and z. It’s about finding an appropriate balance between management by objectives and pure development” (SMGHOSM12).
6.10.2.4 Appraising Staff Performance

Although UL’s SRDS was intended to be developmental in nature, when it came to appraising staff against their performance objectives, one HOS stated, “Well, you can’t. Well, it’s not that you can’t because you can, but you’re not supposed to, that’s not what it’s about….it’s not performance management and it’s not appraisal and was never intended to be” (SMGHOSF16). Another HOS thought that because they were a small school where everybody knew what everybody else was doing, it was “not a problem to assess the performance relative to the target, we all know it, because we all know each other – we work very closely with each other” (SMGHOSM15) and another HOS encouraged staff to appraise themselves and reflect on their objectives before coming to the review, although conceded that “anything that forces us to confront uncomfortable would probably do us good actually” (SMGHOSM14).

Four HOUs and two HOSs felt that the SRDS was fully integrated into their schools and units and four HOUs and five HOSs describe the scheme as used annually but with further developments necessary. As with other HEIs and the sector generally, both schools and units seem to struggle to make the scheme work (Beesley et al., 2004). For HOUs there are issues with securing staff engagement in service areas such as catering and estates with a feeling that it would be easier and more appropriate to operate the scheme for more senior posts. For HOSs there are continuing issues in terms of operating the scheme because of the unclear management structures and accountabilities and staff are either dodging or sabotaging the scheme with apparently no action being taken.
The majority of HOSs and HOUs feel that the scheme is useful for identifying training and development needs, although some feel that they would be able to do that in any event. Because the scheme was designed to be developmental, any appraisal of performance takes place outside of the scheme, in some schools and units but not others.

HEIs are continuing to re-adjust and re-vamp their appraisal schemes in line with their HR strategies, following the HEFCE investment of £330 million over three years, but it is unclear as to how successful any appraisal scheme will be until the reluctance from some academics to accept their management roles and responsibilities (Archer 2005) has been overcome.

6.11 CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND SUCCESSION PLANNING

The SMG were asked to describe how they currently identify and nurture the staff within their school/unit as part of career development and succession planning arrangements.

6.11.1 Career Development and Succession Planning in Units

Two of the HOUs identified that succession planning would only be applicable to certain roles within their unit. As one HOU pointed out, if they were to lose some credit or debit clerks, there would be a gap for a while, but the posts would be relatively easy to fill and people could be trained up fairly quickly. However, the problems would start with the more technical roles:

you know, Payroll would be an example – if Percy or Bill or both of them were to be off then we’d have a real issue if it was for any amount of time and to be quite honest we haven’t got much by way of cover there. But I don’t think it’s really practical to try and cover
that eventuality, anyway I mean I think if Bill is off Percy can obviously do the job and vice versa so you are making the assumption that any unexpected absence would be for the short term and that it would only be one of them, so you're into the sort of disaster planning scenario rather than succession planning (SMGHOUM3).

Two HOUs talked about delegating particular tasks in order to up-skill staff for example in health and safety "over the last two years Cormac McLaggen has been Chair of the Health and Safety L&IS Committee. Now that's up to Madame Pince this year. Now they will both have Chaired the Health and Safety Committee.....careful delegation to bring them on" (SMGHOUM7). Another HOU recommended the use of a professional procurement qualification as a means of attracting and retaining staff, at least for the three years whilst they were studying “and by the last year they should be doing some pretty decent stuff....then the hard part is keeping them for the fourth year!....possibly a retention allowance?” (SMGHOUM2). SMGHOUM6 also talked of qualifications as means of ensuring the right level of expertise, as part of the five year strategy.

Succession planning through the natural process of retirement was mentioned by one HOU as an easier way to plan for the future “I anticipate in the forthcoming year that we will get a level of turnover, ....one of whom I know will retire in the next planning cycle, ...and I’ve already discussed with him a year in advance as one of my own personal objectives, what we will do as part of the succession planning” (SMGHOUM6).
One HOU however, thought that succession planning was difficult because they had a very flat structure, populated with very specialist staff. Consequently if one person left there would not automatically be another to take their place. Another HOU said that rather than relying on staff good will to take on extra responsibility, they would like to see the pay scales opened up with standards and progression criteria in place “something to aim for and I think we need a more corporate sort of support to that approach…..it’s easier in some ways being a trading area because we can fund that sort of specialist training, but it’s the rewarding and motivating….“ (SMGHOUF9).

6.11.2 Career Development and Succession Planning in Schools

Succession planning was a very real issue for three of the HOSs, because of key staff leaving. One HOS felt prevented from succession planning because the budgetary arrangements didn’t allow for any transitional cover “I think there are serious issues about it…and I’m panicking to keep the ship going…so I think if you want succession planning, then you’ve got to invest in it” (SMGHOSF17). The others explained as follows:

Succession planning is a really big thing with me, in that the extremely unique course director on the Advanced Potion Making is retiring next summer. I mean in the case of George Weasley we are still trying to agree on the plans – I mean we’ve obviously got a few months. EMG are making it more complicated by saying Oh well if you want to, you can appoint a Professor or something like that, to either take over his job or to act as a sort of hovering father figure and we’ve got a bit of choice and we’re trying to work out how to do it right. But I think that anyone who works longer than their retirement age is an idiot – I shall be going at sixty! (SMGHOSM14).

I’ll tell you what, it’s bloody difficult. I mean I know that I’ve got a whole bunch of very experienced staff who are going to be leaving soon and I just find it so difficult when I am being ‘blocked’ in terms
of the staffing apps\(^1\) process. I think there are two critical appointments – I mean they are all critical but two are more critical – that’s the Head of Transfiguration and the Head of Charms and I’ve got to make that appointment I believe, certainly six months in advance, three months might be more appropriate but let’s say in that final run up to exam boards. So the Charms Department is the kind of barometer of the health of any Art School, so that’s a critical one as well. It doesn’t necessarily need to be mentored in, but when I look at the staff, I don’t think there is the ambition to develop from any of the roles, but also, I think that there has been too much of a tradition of promoting from within and then you don’t get the ‘fresh blood’ as it were (SMGHOSM13).

For other HOSs, they try to succession plan by encouraging staff to take on new roles such as working alongside a Programme Director or being a joint Year Tutor with a more experienced member of staff. Additionally, they try to develop individuals as part of the staff review and development process:

I will always talk to staff about what is the next step in the ladder they need to go to and what are the requirements for that step. And again, that’s about the staff development they need in order to reach that step. That is like a standard part of the agenda in the staff review meeting – we look at what is the next stage and how to get there. ‘I’m a senior lecturer and I require a PL, so what are the next stages for me’? And we divide the staff development accordingly – according to need (SMGHOSM15).

Whilst there was a general consensus amongst HOSs and HOUs that succession planning was only appropriate for higher level roles which tended to be more difficult to replace, the whole issue of succession planning appeared to be more critical for the HOSs. The speedy replacement of indispensable staff such as Programme Directors or key teaching staff was essential to the delivery of the business. HOSs were unhappy that the financial arrangements did not allow for a handover period between key staff leaving and new staff starting.

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\(^1\) Staffing apps – a staffing application process to agree staff numbers, posts, levels etc.
Both schools and units tried to encourage relevant staff to take on other responsibilities, or work alongside already skilled staff in order to gain the skills and experience necessary to secure more senior positions. Qualification based study was mentioned by some HOUs as a way of retaining staff and also as a means of ensuring that the organisation has the right levels of expertise for the future.

There was no evidence of a structured organisational succession planning process in place and there was no reference made to the use of any formal Development Centres to assist in this process. However, there was evidence that some consideration had been given by HOSs and HOUs to career development and succession planning and some more informal methods were being deployed within the schools and units.

6.12 REWARDING PERFORMANCE

Members of SMG were asked about their views on rewarding good performance, which evoked a mixed range of responses. There were some fairly strong feelings from both the HOUs and HOSs in relation to how good and poor performance should or should not be treated. Extracts from these responses are presented below:

6.12.1 The Collective Voice of the HOUs

*Flexible benefits like what? Don’t say time off because that’s totally counterproductive!!* (SMGHOUM1).

*A medal?! With all these different types of schemes – I don’t know what sort of message is that giving? I think that’s not the way to go* (SMGHOUM5).
I come from a background where personal contracts were the norm – once you get beyond floor level if you like – and there was a true performance related pay system (SMGHOUM2).

I think we should reward good performance and dis-benefit poor performance (SMGHOUM7).

I think, well….there’s also the thank you and letting people know…that goes a long way (SMGHOUF9).

If they are doing their job – what they are supposed to be doing, then that’s that, but when you’ve got people contributing more to the ‘UL effort’ that needs to be recognised (SMGHOUF8).

Yeah, I think that would be a good idea! Right, well, again… certain texts would say that money isn’t the only motivator or whatever, but I think in realistic terms it would have to be some sort of bonus scheme (SMGHOUM3).

I think if people can do the same job at the same pay and then one can do it much better… it can be divisive you know (SMGHOUM4).

6.12.2 The Collective Voice of the HOSs

I think rewarding good performance is a good thing if it is managed sensitively. There is a difference between those that go the extra mile and what I call the flat liner (SMGHOSM12).

I am fundamentally against performance related pay. In a people based system, why should I get it, when I would have got it off the back of my team? (SMGHOSM10).

I think UL has got a very, very imperfect view of what people should do and I think it’s the nature of the business that we’re in (SMGHOSF17).

I think in this particular school, at this particular time, it would be folly to say anything other than it needs to be a reward (SMGHOSM11).

It’s not necessarily a financial reward, I think extracting appreciation is very important although there comes a time when that is not enough and in fact if you express appreciation too much, then people will go and say ‘well I deserve a promotion because you keep saying how good I am!’ (SMGHOSF16).
I think it’s very difficult to beat good old fashioned money myself. I think it gives you more in control of your destiny as well, which people like (SMGHOSM14).

When I was rewarded for my good performance in the States, it really was a sharing of the profits in the form of very tasty cheques (SMGHOSM13).

Ahh, I think UL is very bad! No, I think good work needs to be rewarded. I think this is one of the main reasons.....I see it in the school where people say, well what’s the point – if I work hard or I don’t work hard I’ve still got the same salary, so why am I working hard? (SMGHOSM15)

6.12.3 Types of Reward

HOSs and HOUs made a variety of suggestions for rewarding staff (see Figures 6.1 and 6.2). These fall mainly into three broad categories: money; flexible benefits such as sabbaticals or prizes; and recognition via praise, thanks and publicity.
we have a ‘good news board’ and I like to see people praised a lot. I give praise out to people and I write to them and let them know I value what they have done, and I publish that and I think that buoys people up in terms of praise and helps to raise their self esteem. I also try and be flexible with staff time in terms of ‘you’ve done enough this week, I don’t want to see you after Friday lunchtime – bugger off!’ – and that would be with project staff more than academic staff (SMGHOSM10)

I think the types of benefits or rewards should include things like, time abatements for research etc., sabbatical leave, incremental funding with honorarium above it e.g. Director of Football involves an extra 15/10 hours a week worth of extra effort. (SMGHOSM12)

I wouldn’t discount money. I mean it is a very tangible way of showing status and it’s something that people understand, so you know, I might be the best HOS in the world, but if I don’t drive around in my flash car or wear my designer clothes then I’m not seen to be…so there’s something about success. For me respect is very, very important and feeling valued as a human being is very important and that sort of thing – so what does that mean in real terms? Well, I suppose it’s about trust. (SMGHOSF17).

I think that a proper sabbatical system, if we had a system that rewarded that academic engagement with learning and teaching would be something that would benefit UL. (SMGHOSM13)

Well, I prefer money because I can do whatever I like with it – buy insurance or buy a holiday. I think something very specific so that if people are performing well we could send them to conference or buy them a lap top to do their work…..or more work at home or something like that. (SMGHOSM15)

And I mean, when have you ever heard anybody in the centre publicly praise anybody?…You haven’t, but why not? You should do – there should be a bloody e-based monthly magazine which says hey! Do you realize that Arthur’s done this and done that? You should do – there should be a bloody e-based monthly magazine which says hey! Do you realize that Arthur’s done this and done that, you know. We get it through the U magazine but who writes the U magazine? We write the bloody U magazine – where’s Marketing going out? I mean, if you’ve got a reporter based in Marketing – one member of staff who’s like an investigative reporter, that goes around everybody and says ‘what’s the good news today?’ and where is our good news bulletin? Or where is our ebased university newspaper which says well this happened today and did you know Fred Weasley has got married?… and you’d have it in like a newspaper and you’d maybe even have ‘well the big burning issue is the academic re-structure’ – somebody could write that and do that and then you’d get a feeling of well, this is good – I actually know something about my organisation and I’ve never met Allison O’Reilly but I know she is married and has got two kids and all that – do you know what I mean? You’d know about the people around you, and we don’t do that and it would be a few thousand pounds a year to get some ‘bright-eyed bushy-tailed’ Liareggub journalist who’s good on email or on the internet and bingo, away you go and it wouldn’t be the only thing you could do. (SMGHOSM10)

I mean has Dumbledore ever written to anybody to tell them ‘very well done’?? Professor Umbridge had 30 years service this year and I wrote to Madame Pomfrey and said, do you realize that he’s got 30 years in? You know, you get a clock after 25 years and a fob watch in just about every other organisation going…..and I never even got a reply. We don’t value our people….It’s disgustingly bad and you have to say whose fault is that and Karkaroff is Director of Human Resources. It’s not only about getting the people in, it’s about looking after them after they’re in. (SMGHOSM10)
I think it’s outlying, low paid services you know, where it makes a huge impact if… we had this award with Dimitrov in catering when we had the away day and where in six years, she hadn’t had a day off and we said look, it’s not to say that – we all have sickness etc. – but gosh, hasn’t that added, you know hasn’t that been helpful to us for six years and everyone gave her a big clap and up she went and you know, we gave her £100…yeah and why not!? You think of the value that we’ve had from that sort of thing – it’s recognition – it’s… I like it! (SMGHOUF9)

May be reward should be linked to the Nolan Principles – so if you act selflessly, then you get an increase in your unit budget and if you don’t, you get a cut in budget! Performance linked to an individual doesn’t work, it has to be a team thing with promotions or progression schemes, or it leads to selfishness, non-accountability and a blame culture – we are here to help the business not the individual. (SMGHOUM7)

I can’t think what, off the top of my head, but it’s not just financial, there’s CPD and all that stuff. (SMGHOUF8)

– money isn’t the only motivator because there are things such as job satisfaction and some plaudit from a job well done. I mean that’s a sort of reward in itself, but that’s coming from sort of within, isn’t it? (SMGHOUM3)

I really struggle with this rewarding thing, although probably a lot of people I would say, would welcome it, but that’s me – I never attended my graduation ceremonies, never turned up to pick up the school prizes – I hate ceremonies – but I don’t mean to be cynical about these things, but I think a lot of people would see these things – not myself of course - as a way of doing something which at least goes on file as a recognition. Maybe, there might be a little prize or something – like a book token, some kind of token so that they could think well yeah, I got the medal and had a free lunch – I don’t know, there may be some mileage in it! (SMGHOUM5)

There used to be a reward scheme in the Steel Company of Wales – there was a suggestion box and they encouraged the staff to put in suggestions yeah? And if that suggestion, was adopted and there were savings made, they would get part of the ‘profits’ – for want of a better word. They would be given a reward for making that suggestion. So that’s possible, a possibility, so you are getting people to think more….mind you, they might be sitting there thinking more than they’re doing their job!!! (SMGHOUM1)

The trouble is, we all have needs, the hierarchical needs and yes OK, we all like the nice office and the hygiene factors and yes, we all like those. The reality is, what people want to see is something financial. Now whether that is cash, a bonus, vouchers…. I mean one thing that makes me cringe is when you go into shops and things and you see staff member of the month…. ‘Katie@TGI Fridays is staff member of the month’ and you think well…..as a customer I would expect them all to be good…I don’t think ‘Oh I’ll wait for the best waitress’, I want them all to be good and I think the hard part is that you’ve got three areas to mark a performance in. You’ve got acceptable, not acceptable or walking on water. Walking on water should receive some kind of recognition…even a letter from the VC which says we recognise what you’ve done, thank you. (SMGHOUM2)

Figure 6.2: Types of Reward Wanted by Support Managers
Organisations are reliant upon people to successfully deliver the business and in return for this, people expect to be rewarded (Anguilar, 2002). Typically, wages, salaries and on-costs make up about 60% of the total running costs of a business and so employers would be wise to take a healthy interest in this particular facet of their operations. HOSs and HOUs were all in agreement that good performance should be rewarded however there are many different opinions when it comes to determining what and how. The suggested rewards fall mainly into three broad categories – money, flexible benefits such as sabbaticals or prizes, and recognition via praise, thanks and publicity, all of which were identified in the literature as being part of a model reward strategy. Of concern to both HOSs and HOUs in terms of performance and reward, was the issue of equity, summed up rather pithily by a HOU: “I think, so long as it’s done in a fair way, because what you find is people are happy with equal misery, but once someone gets something better…oh you could rock the boat”! (SMGHOUF9).

6.12.4 HOSs and HOUs Points of View

A variety of viewpoints relating to performance were expressed during the interviews. These are set out as follows:

- **Improvements to Recruitment and Selection - Table 6.6**
- **Improvements in Induction and Probation – Table 6.2**
- **Views on Rewarding Performance – Table 6.3**
- **General Performance Management Conversations – Figure 6.6**
I’m fairly happy with the process. If I have any complaints, it’s about the budgetary side of things which limits where we can go in the market. (SMGHOUM1)

I think that question needs to be asked of somebody who applied and perhaps didn’t get the job. (SMGHOUM5)

I think we probably don’t spend enough investment in recruitment because at the end of the day people is what it is all about and if we want good people, we need to invest in order to get good people and we probably try to do recruitment on the cheap! (SMGHOUM7)

I think we’re not as sharp as some organisations in making sure the references are properly screened. (SMGHOUF9) And I also think the scrutiny of the contracts – they are very much standard and so many of ours are non-standard. So I think that attention to that, – making sure that they are looking, so that we don’t end up with…. (SMGHOUF9)

Sometimes I think we need a bit of flexibility in terms of filling the vacancies yeah? (SMGHOUF8)

It’s a process that needs a complete overhaul. It’s not a very user friendly process for customers i.e. managers using it. It is necessarily very process bound because one of the fundamentals is in terms of equality in relation to recruitment, but it doesn’t allow a lot of flexibility in terms of our approaches to resourcing rather than recruitment – it’s a wider debate really – it’s resourcing, as opposed to simply recruitment through usual methods. Because that would include use of agency staff, consultants, it would include the use of short term placements, secondments (SMGHOUM6).

Well from a…with my finance hat on…from that point of view, I’m quite happy with the process, I mean you’ve got the staffing apps and you’ve got a review of whether the job is needed – I mean this is coming back to the point I was making earlier, we’ve been doing it for 20 years and nobody actually stops to ask, do we still need to do it or whatever, so I think the staffing apps – from a financial and operational point of view – is a very good process, so that those questions are asked every time a vacancy comes up. I mean some of those questions should be asked even when we haven’t got a vacancy, you know, as a review of what the departments or units are doing anyway. But umm, from a departmental point of view, I could understand managers saying well, I’ve got key members of staff and the staffing apps process is still very vague you know, a member of staff resigns and I could fill in the form or whatever, requesting a replacement and by the time that form is dealt with, invariably the member of staff is gone, so there’s never going to be any handover to start with and it’s just how quickly we can make an appointment so that you know, the gap is so…I can imagine that that would be an issue. (SMGHOUM3)

References are a problem. I’d much rather have the references at the interview and we rarely do – although some now are so bland that they’re not worth the …..I believe in total openness. (SMGHOUF4).
I think the way in which we advertise jobs is very boring – you look at the Times Higher or the Education Guardian – the way in which we advertise the posts doesn’t set the world alight – it’s very old hat! You look at one or two different institutions or companies and the advert will hit you and immediately it will begin to create an impression about the organisation and the impression you get about UL is ….? What I don’t understand, is that we do all this jazzy stuff on marketing with the ‘UL effect’, but we never take that ‘UL effect’ to say hey! Lecturers or Administrators come on into UL. (SMGHOSM10)

I think job analysis and the person specification for definite. I mean I think that, I think that if people do the things that are required of them, then…..so I mean I think that the Chair of the panel training is a good thing – it’s defined as being compulsory for all Chairs and so you should get a good outcome and I think the quality bit is about how you write good job descriptions and person specs, personally. I think we need a load of HR training for people around the place, I mean across the whole institution really. (SMGHOSF17)

I think the biggest advantage is not having to have anyone from EMG Chairing. It really has made a big difference in terms of not delaying. I didn’t have any criticism of EMG members Chairing interviews when it happened, it was just that there were too few of them and too many interviews! (SMGHOSF16)

I think we should re-start going to press for all appointments. I think it’s a nonsense saving it up to make one or two wrong appointments…..so press I would say because press gets a more…matching set of cutlery at the end if you like. eBay as a way to do it – you may well do it for £1.99 if you’re lucky….mind you I did make a big eBay purchase once and it was rubbish - £250 quid down the drain basically – yes, really upsetting that, umm but I think that would be my strongest thing. (SMGHOSM14)

It’s different for different jobs, but for academics in some universities they have to do a presentation in front of people. They invite the whole school to these presentations. I think that’s very useful for academics, but for researchers….? Well the same should apply for researchers as well. (SMGHOSM15)
### Table 6.2: Improvements in Induction and Probation

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<td>We ask our contractors to sign to say they have read and understood our Health and Safety Policy, so why not staff?! (SMGHOUM1)</td>
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<td>Well on an individual basis, I think we need to be a little bit more…improve our induction so that we do all that properly at a local level(SMGHOUM3)</td>
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<td>In terms of Corporate Induction, I think the organisation should be at least welcoming…..and sending someone a CD I don't think is welcoming! It’s back to this people management thing isn’t it? - the people skills side of things – I’m all for it being an addition to, but not instead of…..I’ve been here for almost twenty years – who updates me in terms of where UL is? Maybe I need a bit of induction!…..I try to keep updated all the time but I don’t always have the opportunity – for example, how many people know now, what the structure of Registry is?...And don’t you think that’s problematic for the organisation? So maybe all that information should be made available to everyone and maybe now and again all managers should be updated…..Well an up to date structure of the organisation should be available to all staff, so that if I’ve got a problem, I go to this structure and say right, that’s who I’ve got to go and see in order to solve this problem. (SMGHOUM7)</td>
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<td>You’ve got the formal things, you know, ‘do you know where the fire escapes are?’ - the usual sort of statutory stuff. I think where we go wrong is that in a lot of inductions, people end up with a checklist, which is fine, and there should be a checklist, but I think the danger is….we all have a limit or a capacity to take on new things and I think the one danger with the checklist is that it is very tempting….OK, you welcome your new member of staff and you go through this, you fire through about fifty things and he doesn’t have a hope in hell of remembering half of them if it’s done too quickly – it needs to be broken into chunks and manageable chunks and make them relevant. (SMGHOUM2)</td>
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<td>.....well you need a bit of a snapshot – something that’s on the web or something sort of ‘welcome to UL, here’s some key facts you need to know’ and perhaps that way, you now, when a new member of staff joins us they get their ID and staff number or what ever – that could be a quick link to the information behind….bring back Corporate Induction! You can use an electronic format but there’s nothing better than having the people presence with someone with 10 – 15 other people who are all new to UL, all in one place – and I think there’s a lot to be said for that. We are a bit inclined to go too far down the electronic route and then you loose the personal touch. (SMGHOUF8)</td>
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<td>My concern is that the induction packs are never ready at the right time of the year and the other thing that falls down, is the speed at which we get people on the system. I mean we get students on in a day, but staff…..I think it took us a week or whatever, so we’ve got these people kicking around just saying ‘well I can’t do this and I can’t do that and we need to have that’….. The other thing I do before anybody gets here, is to book them all onto a blackboard induction. I think that should be the norm. (SMGHOUSM11) And then I think if Unit Heads have to give a local induction, then I think that they should have a little bit of training in it…..you know, you could just take me through what I should be doing to new people, you know treat me as if I was a new comer to it and I don’t know, perhaps other people don’t find it difficult – not that I find it difficult. It’s just that I don’t think that I do a particularly good job at it! (SMGHOUSM14)</td>
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<td>I think again, to me – it’s probably just my ignorance – but it doesn’t seem like there are standardised procedures, there are different practices in different schools. I mean when I was appointed in UL, I had something called orientation and there were people in the school that I didn’t meet until two years after I was here, so again, I think there are different practices and I think it would be nice to have some staff development and training on induction. (SMGHOUSM15)</td>
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you can have quite a lot of underperformance out there and sort of not doing the things that are expected, so I think we should strengthen up the kind of probationary period. (SMGHOSF17)

I don’t think the probationary period is seen as an individual enhancement exercise – it’s more getting used to the job and start performing. I think there should be more regular forms of probationary meeting. (SMGHOUM7)
But when is the job of an academic done? It kind of flows here and it flows there… I mean there’s no kind of nine ‘til five ish about it, and actually for some people, nine ‘til five turns into twelve ‘til twelve, for some people it turns into eleven ‘til two or twelve ‘til one – do you know what I mean? So you can seriously under invest in doing what needs to be done and still get away with the job (SMGHOSF17).

I mean if you try and measure Karkaroff or from a finance perspective – what are our outputs really? You could say you’ve met your target or not – a lot of it is sort of the impression of the individual, and you can get a lot of sort of charismatic individuals, who impress, but when you look at what they do, you might think well it doesn’t add up – it’s sort of being disguised if you like isn’t it? They might be very good at what they do - but they might not, but the impression is that they’re very personable and they do very well. (SMGHOUM3)

Recognising what we already do - you see what’s happening is the delegation of the resource into the school. It’s not that they’re not get the money, they’re not financially getting the money but the school is subsidising – I mean once you give somebody 100 hours remission for running a large course – 100 hours is a lot of time and you’ve then got to pay out for somebody else. You’re still paying them, it’s just coming from a different pot and you’re not actually physically paying them, your paying somebody else to do what it is they would have been doing otherwise…why not just give them the money – it would be a lot less complicated! Have two less people in the RAM or whatever, stick the money in the pot and just give them the money. That’s what we are talking about, and because we don’t actually do that, we think we’re not doing it but we are doing it! Normally people teach just over 400 hours, well that resource is being carried by the school…..(SMGHOSM11)

I mean, I don’t understand the local government grading scales – you get course directors who are lecturers on a grade one err you get people who do nothing at all who are principle lecturers, so there’s no rhyme nor reason for it at all. What we should be saying is that good performance gets you recognised. Once you have agreed that you will reward good performance rather than punishing poor performance, then you should come up with some strict objective criteria that will enable you to do it…..There is a hell of a difference between someone who does it adequately - and you can’t complain - and somebody who does it really well. (SMGHOSM14)

I don’t think UL, and I don’t think it’s the only institution, is very good at rewarding people because what people see is people getting rewarded for the wrong things. So, what always used to happen when I first came here, is that people who couldn’t teach were kicked upstairs …so you had managers who…most people who can’t teach end up on the shelf and not in any managerial role and that is always what we used to see…and you do get a bit of that where people are found things to do, which other people might really want to do and do very well, but because they are already very good at what they are already doing, then that’s where they are. (SMGHOSF16)
I was always taught that by the Chief Administrator - he said well you don’t expect me to thank you for what I’m paying you to do - do you?! If you do something a bit more, I might think of thanking you. It’s the old servant…. and I think we are afraid of that maybe in the west. But they did believe that at best I am a profitable servant and I’m paid to do a job therefore I should be doing that job to the best of my ability…and therefore, how can I do it any better? Now if I’m making widgets, and I’m employed to make 50 widgets a week and then somebody says, well if we pay you a bit more, can you make 60 widgets a week? I might think about it, but then I’m going to think, well how long can I go on….if somebody has worked out that it’s reasonable to make 50 widgets a week, is it reasonable then to increase it by ten, unless they change the process? If somebody can physically only do 50, any incentive or appraisal is not going to make them do 60…there’s got to be a change in the management…so hold on, why do you need an appraisal system to change the management? Do you see where I’m going? (SMGHOUM1)

You know, does my job take long because I am slow at doing it? And I think those are the things that need to be explored against each individual….because you know, I think if they’re blooming slow at doing it, they shouldn’t be paid for it! But I mean sometimes it’s an issue of working overtime and not being rewarded for it at all…. I mean I think there’s also an issue about things like the European Working Directive and you know, I do think that for both positive and negative reasons that impacts ultimately on health and stuff like that…so I think there has got to be much more understanding about HR practice and things like that and I would like to see much more flexible benefits rather than financial benefits, but it’s also important to say that’s a job well done! (SMGHOUSF17).

But you know, we’ve had people in jobs for many years getting well paid and not doing bugger all – and getting away with it. (SMGHOUM4)
ANY OTHER COMMENT YOU MAY HAVE IN RELATION TO THE WHOLE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT DEBATE?

I have learnt how to be a good strategic manager as I have gone along. I also manage my budgets well and yet I have never read a book on it, it’s just something that you develop as you go along. It would be useful if there was someway of helping you appreciate how you do what you do. Most staff are very bright and academically able. They are competitive by nature and tend to have big ego’s. This has to be managed very positively. If you managed by authority you would end up in a very confrontational situation. It's far better to manage through consensus. (SMGHOSM12)

We need to be skilled in dealing with problems as they occur, or else the problems just snowball. Training in dealing with difficult situations would help, when you look under the carpet there’s a can of worms. It would be good to be able to share experiences with other experienced managers. There is a lot of watching your back or knitting others that goes on and this needs to be resolved – perhaps we need to go back to the Nolan Principals. (SMGHOUM7)

Well I think my – I’ve been in UL for about seven years now – and one of the things that I think there is a weakness with, is that there is no definition or clear boarder between the responsibilities of different people – there’s always overlap of the responsibilities, and there’s always …you don't know who to ask, err to do things, because it all overlaps. In my view, I think defining clear boarders of responsibility is very helpful. (SMGHOSM15)

But it’s always been curious to me, with all these things that happen in schools, why don’t they happen in higher education? They’re the same in a way – we’ve just got senior students rather than children. But human beings all work in a similar way – we all like praise, we like to see that we are doing a good job, I think and I think that where it can become part of a problem, because it’s all about care, and if you’ve got to tell them off, you tell them off and if you’ve got to reward them, you reward them and the balance should always be more towards reward. But if you've got to tell them off, you've got to tell them off……whatever age, we’re all human beings aren’t we? We all have the same emotions and things. (SMGHOUM4)

I also think that one of the things we don’t do, is that we get very insular, - ‘sucked inward’. I mean you know what it was like at Gregynog and there, a lot of people were saying hey this was good, why don’t we do this more often? ‘We had the academic re-structure debate and I said at the end, that one of the secrets of managing change effectively is open and honest, transparent communication and Professor Sprout turned around and said ‘oh, so you want more hugs?’ and I said, ‘no, it’s not about wanting more hugs – it’s about having less structured, informal…’ when do we ever have informal opportunities for discussion? When do level three ever meet with level two and one in a brainstorming way outside of Learning and Teaching or Academic Board – never! So how do we share ideas? How do we innovate? And then you take that down a level and say, when does an academic member of staff in a school ever get the opportunity, – other than formal situations, or contrived situations like the Learning and Teaching Conference, or whatever, – get an opportunity to talk with people in Art? Because there must be potential there and then the learning organisation thing is not then happening…..because the structures – either informal or formal – are not there to allow that to happen. (SMGHOSM10)

Figure 6.3: Performance Management Conversations, Academic and Support Managers
6.13 OVERALL CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.13.1 Understanding Performance

As with the members of EMG, the holistic, complex and multi-disciplinary nature of performance management (as described by the Cranfield School of Management (2007), did not come across in the individual responses of the HOSs or HOU s although there were pockets of understanding in relation to strategy, aims and objectives and individual, team or organisational performance improvement.

Three of the SMG made reference to organisational strategy (SMGHOUM6, SMGHOSM10 and SMGHOSF16). Three Heads of Unit and four Heads of School (SMGHOUF9, SMGHOUF5, SMGHOUM3, SMGHOSM12, SMGHOSM13, SMGHOSM15 and SMGHOSF17) were all able to recognise the importance of having plans, objectives and targets in place, but not all of them made the connection between the alignment of those plans, objectives and targets, to the business and no mention was made of any HRM/HRD related activity.

Armstrong and Baron (1998) assert that performance management is about achieving individual, team or organisational effectiveness through performance improvement (recognised by SMGHOUM1, SMGHOUF8 and SMGHOSM11) but emphasize that it is equally, if not more importantly, concerned with development. The SMG (apart from the sports analogy given by SMGHOSM12)
were all silent about the role of people development in performance management and continuous improvement.

The implications of this are critical. Without a common understanding of the holistic, complex and multi-disciplinary nature of performance management, there is a danger that different standards are being applied by different managers across the organisation, sending out mixed messages to the middle managers below.

**Recommendations:**

Adoption of a performance management model would provide a better understanding of the complex and multi-disciplinary nature of performance management as well as a more structured framework for managing performance holistically.

A briefing session should be required (for each management group) on the performance management model outlining their roles and responsibilities within that context and emphasising the contribution of people development to continuous improvement.

**6.13.2 Measuring and Managing Performance at School/Unit Level**

There was a noticeable difference between the HOSs and HOUs in terms of how they measured and managed performance at school/unit level.
HOUs appeared to manage within more defined structures and frameworks, particularly in relation to budgets, timescales and planning processes. They also utilized processes such as annual reporting, staff performance review and some HOUs elicited client feedback through the use of surveys.

HOSs on the other hand, found measuring and managing performance at school level more problematic with only two of them utilizing their School Management and Planning Teams to review progress against the schools plans and objectives. Another HOS felt that it was easier to measure the performance of support staff rather than academic staff and another was concerned about some of the problems associated with performance such as being “consistently rotten” (SMGHOSM14). For others, an eclectic range of measurements were deployed including numbers of staff engaged in research, numbers of students recruited and organisational climate.

In keeping with the HM Treasury (2001), one HOU referenced the formulation of SMART objectives as a means of translating strategy into practice, but overall, there was no real sense from the SMG of an explicit performance measurement system being in place. The absence of consistent sets of performance measures and appropriate SMART objectives makes it difficult for staff at lower levels to understand what the organisation is trying to achieve and their contribution towards that. If there are limited or ill-defined performance measures in place, then it is unlikely that information relating to these will be collected. This can lead to subjective assessments of performance based on hearsay rather than hard, factual evidence.
**Recommendations:**

The organisation would benefit from further promulgating the use of the (corporate) BSC down through the management levels within UL, so that managers and staff can make a better connection between top level indicators and school/unit indicators.

It is expected (as part of the staff performance review) that all staff should have a set of SMART work and development objectives (linked to UL’s strategies and plans). Members of SMG are advised to consider what steps might be taken to ensure that all staff do and to consider what action to take to combat non-compliance within their school/unit.

### 6.13.3 Benchmarking

HOSs recognised the increasing importance of benchmarking and used widening access, numbers of firsts and 2:1s, first destination, withdrawal rates and RAE as benchmarking measures. HOUs tended to use benchmarking indicators that were relevant to their functions such as the estates management statistics in the Estates Department, or number of people accessing a service in the Library. However, they warned of the dangers of not measuring like for like. Although there is some benchmarking taking place in UL, it is underdeveloped and there is little evidence of any systematic benchmarking activity across the organisation. This corresponds with the findings of the CUC (2006, p.19) who identified that “many institutions are still at a relatively early stage of development of KPIs”.
The implications of not having in place developed benchmarking processes are that it is difficult for members of SMG to monitor the quality and standards of the school/unit against the open market or direct competitors. This is a lost opportunity to keep abreast of developments and performance at local, national and international levels, and potentially hampers the school/units ability to be responsive.

**Recommendations:**

That EMG/SMG should determine and make known throughout the organisation which benchmarking measures are useful and which are not. This will ensure that valuable comparisons take place repeatedly over time and that only relevant data is collected.

There is a need to make explicit the criteria against which performance will be measured and to ensure that this is communicated to the next level of management - the middle managers.

**6.13.4 Measuring and Managing Individual Performance**

The findings show that only 50% of the HOSs reported using the staff review and development scheme to measure and manage individual performance, although the lack of line management arrangements and accountabilities were found to hinder the process. Other methodologies used included appointing the right person in the first place, encouraging interactive relationships and occasionally observing lectures.
In comparison, HOUs had more formalised management processes in place with nearly 80% using the SRDS to involve staff in the target setting process. In addition, as part of their day-to-day management activities they held regular meetings and briefings.

Some HOSs and HOUs try to support performance by taking on an ‘enabling role’ and encourage staff to talk through their training and development requirements as part of the review process, including, reflecting on what went well (or not so well) and why. Some also take time to improve their communication channels through regular feedback sessions. There is however, no specific mention of coaching and mentoring as a means of supporting performance.

Although HOUs appear to have more formalised arrangements in place for measuring and managing performance at individual level than HOSs, there is a concern that the staff performance review scheme is not being fully utilised (50% schools and 77% units). If staff performance is not monitored on a regular basis (as part of the performance review scheme and day-to-day management arrangements) then it can become difficult to tackle issues of underperformance in a timely manner. Similarly if appropriate staff development, mentoring or coaching activities are not attended to sufficiently, then staff can become less effective in their roles. This is a missed performance improvement opportunity.
**Recommendations:**

The adoption of a performance management model with agreed performance measures would provide a clearer framework for managing individual performance. The criteria against which performance will be measured should be made explicit to staff.

There is a need to develop a more robust coaching and mentoring framework within UL to support staff in their roles.

There is a need to put in place firmer line management arrangements (particularly in the schools).

There is a need to ensure that all staff performance reviews are carried out and that any non-compliance is addressed.

There is a need to plan staff development activity to support staff in their roles. It is suggested that each school/unit monitor individual staff development arrangements which in turn will inform an annual school/unit staff development plan.
6.13.5 Managing Underperformance

Overall, the findings indicate that HOSs and HOUs take different approaches to managing underperformance. HOUs appear to have more defined arrangements and practices in place for managing underperformance, including preventative measures such agreeing objectives and standards at the outset, so that the individual knows what is expected of them. Should performance go awry then HOUs reported that they take investigative steps to find out why and follow formal UL procedures. In comparison, some HOSs felt unable to tackle issues of underperformance due to inadequate line-management arrangements and a history of “doing bugger all about it” (SMGHOSM14). Where underperformance was identified as an issue, some HOSs invited the individual in “for a coffee and a chat” (SMGHOSM12).

In addition, three significant issues emerged from discussions. Firstly that sickness absence was not consciously seen as an underperformance issue, secondly that one HOU was concerned that 50% of managers were non-compliant and that no action was taken in response to this and thirdly, that there is a view amongst academics that staff should be allowed to work on principles of trust. However, where the principles of trust were used to replace day-to-day management arrangements, individuals were found to be vulnerable.

These conclusions have some significant implications. Some issues of underperformance are being addressed whilst others are not. This implies that different standards are therefore being applied by different SMG managers across the organisation, sending out mixed messages to the middle managers.
Where issues of poor performance are not being addressed, this signals to others further down the organisation that no action will be taken in response to poor performance and therefore it must be acceptable to behave in that manner. Trust should not equate to being left alone to get on with it - if performance (both good and poor) is not managed, staff can feel isolated and not valued. In addition, the non recognition of sickness absence as an underperformance issue is a lost performance improvement opportunity, particularly in relation to cost-savings.

**Recommendations:**

There is a need to put in place firmer line management arrangements (particularly in the schools) supported by training so that managers are equipped to undertake their role;

Trust should not replace day-to-day management arrangements – there is a need to change the perception of staff and managers so that both are seen as important.

There needs to be some more formal training in managing performance for example through setting objectives and in understanding and complying with some of the key HR policies and processes such as induction, probation, staff performance review, capability, sickness absence, grievance and discipline.

Training and development opportunities should be provided for managers in some of the softer skill areas such as:
How to have those awkward performance conversations with staff

And some of the procedural/legislative areas such as:

- How to conduct effective investigations and stay within the law

SMG compliance with HR policy and processes needs to be monitored by EMG and appropriate action taken if issues of non-compliance are identified.

6.13.6 Recruitment and Selection

There was some reference made by HOSs to existing and potential recruitment difficulties in particular areas such as the health professions (UCEA, 2005), indicating that some managers were looking beyond the perimeter fence. Some also made mention of the need to put more investment into advertising in the right journals in order to attract the right people.

Both HOSs and HOUs were aware of the importance of spending time exacting the requirements of the job, job description and person specification and training was identified as a requirement to support this. However, there was no evidence to suggest that managers were aware of the overall cost of the recruitment and selection exercise, especially in terms of getting it wrong. The impact of a badly chosen appointment on a school or unit can be significant both in financial and emotional terms (Thomson, 2002) as can a claim of direct or indirect discrimination (Equal Opportunities Commission, 2007). There was no reference made by SMG managers to employment legislation, but examples of ‘gut feelings’, filling out the scores after the event and writing job descriptions around a preferred person were given, indicating that although some HOUs and
HOSs talk about following HR policy and procedure, the reality might be different.

Not getting the recruitment and selection process right is a lost opportunity to improve performance. If SMG do not view recruitment and selection as a strategic tool for attracting, recruiting and retaining high quality staff, or they are not aware of the overall cost of the recruitment exercise it is unlikely that recruitment and selection will be regarded as significant. If the process is not afforded the attention it requires, there is greater potential to fall foul of the law. It is also likely that the next level of managers – the middle managers, will emulate the practices of their managers at SMG level.

**Recommendations:**

It would be advantageous to engage a firm of solicitors to provide a bespoke session to the SMG on key HR responsibilities and accountabilities.

There is a need to review all the recruitment and selection processes and guidelines to ensure they are fit for purpose. These need to then be supported by some bite sized training modules for example, writing JDs and PSs, Interviewing techniques, Job analysis and evaluation, immigration law, equalities legislation etc. so that managers understand their role within the process.

That further consideration be given to the improvements sought by SMG in the staff review process at UL:
➢ Budgets limit where we can go in the market
➢ Get feedback from those who were unsuccessful
➢ We try to do recruitment ‘on the cheap’
➢ Making sure references are properly scanned
➢ Scrutiny of contracts
➢ Flexibility needed in terms of filling vacancies
➢ Process needs a complete overhaul – not user friendly
➢ Staff applications process too slow
➢ Have the references at the interview
➢ The way we advertise jobs is boring
➢ How to write good JDs and PS and how to do a good job analysis
➢ Presentations and other forms of skills testing needed at interview for different roles.

6.13.7 Induction

The literature asserts that inefficient and unorganised approaches to staff induction account for at least a week of dead-time when employees join an organisation and are the cause of 19% of people leaving organisations within the first six months.

There was evidence from both HOSs and HOUs of some strong induction processes being in place, for example, the use of corporate induction checklists, mini teaching and learning top tips sessions, allocations of mentors or responsible persons, guided tours and demonstrations of systems and
processes. At the same time, there was evidence from both HOSs and HOUs of some weaker methodologies such as “I would tend to just drop in and say is everything OK”, or “If there are no questions then there’s the lavatory and there’s the canteen…” with some HOUs self confessing to having haphazard or weak induction processes in place. There was little or no mention of covering important topics such as performance and training, standards and rules, health and safety, and terms and conditions of employment as described by Rankin, (2004, p.44).

The potential implications are that if SMG are not regarding HR processes (such as induction) as their overall responsibility, or not making clear their expectations to middle managers, then there is a danger that induction will be either ignored or diluted. Staff that have not been inducted appropriately will not understand organisational, school/unit expectations and will find it difficult to reach optimum levels of performance. Induction should be regarded as a performance management tool. Any failure to carry out an appropriate induction is therefore a missed performance improvement opportunity.

**Recommendations:**

It is recommended that HR work on a bespoke basis with HOSs and HOUs to put in place local standards for induction within schools and units.

That arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of induction at a school/unit level are agreed and implemented;
That issues of non-compliance by SMG are identified by EMG and appropriate action taken;

That further consideration be given to the improvements sought by SMG in the induction process at UL:

- Get staff to sign to say they have read and understood our policies
- Improve induction so that it is done properly at a local level
- Keeping existing staff updated with corporate information
- Up to date structure of the organisation so that people know where to go
- Break induction down into manageable chunks so it isn’t overload
- Key facts about UL
- Don’t loose the personal side of induction – not all electronic
- Training managers in how to conduct an effective induction
- Get new staff set up on systems quickly so that they can operate straight away
- Standardize practices across schools

6.13.8 Probation

Even though some form filling does take place when prompted, there is little evidence that HOSs and HOUs fully understand the implications of the probation period, particularly in relation to communicating performance expectations and monitoring progress. Arrangements for probation in some schools were practically non-existent, although some HOSs felt they were confident about the person at interview and that it was difficult to gather hard
performance data on academics. Some HOUs had local probationary arrangements in place although there was a general recognition that there was a need to tighten up on procedures.

As with the induction process, the potential implications are that if SMG are not regarding HR processes (such as probation) as their overall responsibility, or not making clear their expectations to their middle members, then there is a danger that probation will be either ignored or diluted. Staff that have not been monitored as part of the probationary arrangements are automatically confirmed into post by default. Probation should be regarded as a performance management tool. Any failure to carry out an appropriate probation is therefore a missed performance improvement opportunity.

**Recommendations:**

It is recommended that HR work on a bespoke basis with the HOSs and HOUs to agree and put in place local standards for probation within schools and units.

That arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of probation at a school/unit level are agreed and implemented;

That issues of non-compliance by SMG are identified by EMG and appropriate action taken;

That further consideration be given to the improvements sought by SMG in the induction process at UL:
- Strengthen up the probationary period to address underperformance issues and people not doing the things that are expected of them.
- More regular forms of probationary meeting

### 6.13.9 Staff Review

Four HOUs and two HOSs feel that the SRDS is fully integrated into their schools and units and four HOUs and five HOSs describe the scheme as used annually but with further developments necessary. As with other HEIs and the sector generally, both schools and units seem to struggle to make the scheme work (Beesley et al., 2004). For HOUs there are issues with getting engagement from staff in service areas such as catering and estates with a feeling that it would be easier and more appropriate to operate the scheme for more senior posts. For HOSs there are continuing issues in terms of operating the scheme because of the unclear management structures and accountabilities and staff are either dodging or sabotaging the scheme with apparently no action being taken.

The majority of HOSs and HOUs feel that the scheme is useful for identifying training and development needs, although some feel that they would be able to do that in any event. Because the scheme was designed to be developmental, any appraisal of performance takes place outside of the scheme, in some schools and units but not others.
There are significant performance implications for an organisation if the formal staff performance review scheme is either not effective or not being carried out. Staff performance review is the main performance management tool and any failure to carry out appropriate performance reviews is therefore a missed opportunity to maximise performance.

**Recommendations:**

Review the existing scheme to create a more performance orientated one i.e. one which requires the assessment of performance against objectives. Produce guidelines on SMARTER objective setting as part of the process.

Put in place monitoring and evaluation processes for staff performance review – are reviews taking place? Are they being carried out effectively?

Issues of non-compliance are identified by EMG and SMG and appropriate action taken;

Put in place mentoring and coaching guidelines to assist managers in facilitating appropriate arrangements for key roles and build on CPD activity.

Ensure that training on the concept of performance management is available to all managers and staff across the university so that there is a shift in culture where review becomes a part of the norm rather than the exception. For consistency across the organisation, managers need to view the review process as a tool for performance management.
That further consideration be given to the improvements sought by SMG in the staff review process at UL:

- Needs to be more monitoring and evaluation of the process
- There needs to be a stronger link to the objectives and plans
- There needs to be a more formal assessment of performance against objectives

6.13.10 Career Development and Succession Planning

It can be concluded that whilst there was a general consensus amongst HOSs and HOUs that succession planning was only appropriate for higher level roles, which tended to be more difficult to replace, the whole issue of succession planning appeared to be more vital for the HOSs. The speedy replacement of critical staff such as Programme Directors or key teaching staff was essential to the delivery of the business. HOSs were unhappy that the financial arrangements did not allow for a handover period between key staff leaving and new staff starting.

Both schools and units tried to encourage relevant staff to take on other responsibilities, or work alongside already skilled staff in order to gain the required skills and experience necessary to move either up the ladder or sideways. Qualification based study was mentioned by some HOUs as a way of retaining staff and also as a means of ensuring that the organisation has the right levels of expertise for the future.
There was no evidence of a structured organisational succession planning process in place and there was no reference made to the use of any formal Development Centres to assist in this process. However, there was evidence that a fair amount of consideration had been given by HOSs and HOUs to career development and succession planning and some more informal methods were being deployed within the schools and units.

The implication of not having appropriate succession planning arrangements in place, is that the organisation may be unable to fill key posts when they become vacant.

**Recommendations:**

Work on a bespoke basis with individual members of SMG to look at mapping out and implementing formal succession planning arrangements for their particular area of responsibility, for example the shared knowledge and practice model promoted by EMG4.

Implement formal management development training arrangements, for example Future Leaders Programme, Heads of Department Programmes, through the LFHE and encourage the further use of existing management development training for example e-learning resources and one day events.

Develop a fast track pool of multi-skilled staff who can resource a variety of vacancies – perhaps through the Concordat arrangements for research staff;
Look at ways of minimising the gap between the Dean of School/Head of Unit and the next level down, for example through the use of Deputy roles.

6.13.11 Rewarding Performance

HOSs and HOUs are all in agreement that good performance should be rewarded however there are many different opinions when it comes to determining what and how. The suggested rewards fall mainly into three broad categories – money, flexible benefits such as sabbaticals or prizes, and recognition via praise, thanks and publicity, all of which were identified in the literature as being part of a model reward strategy. Of concern to both HOSs and HOUs in terms of performance and reward, was the issue of equity, summed up rather pithily by a HOU who said “what you find is people are happy with equal misery, but once someone gets something better…oh you could rock the boat! (SMGHOUF9)”.

The implication of not having a fully developed reward strategy in place is that staff will not recognise the benefits that already exist and may feel undervalued. This may lead to motivational issues or retention problems in the future.
**Recommendations:**

That UL consider developing a reward strategy and publicise current rewards more widely to staff so that they are viewed as benefits, for example the contributory pension scheme, generous annual leave, occupational health etc.

That further consideration be given to the suggestions given by SMG for the types of reward that academic and support managers would like to see in place, set out in Figures 6.1 and 6.2 when developing a reward strategy.

**6.13.12 General Comments on Performance Management**

At the end of the one-to-one interview, HOSs and HOUs were invited to make any other comments they had in relation to performance management. These are detailed in Figure 6.3 but are summarised as follows:

- It is far better to manage through consensus.
- It would be nice to have some formal management development training rather than having to just develop as you go along
- We need more social space for meetings and innovation
- We need to be skilled in dealing with problems as they occur, or else the problems just snowball
- A weakness is that there is no definition or clear boundaries between the responsibilities of different people
- Why isn’t HE like primary and secondary school? They are the same in a way – we’ve just got senior students rather than children.
The next chapter, Chapter Seven will analyse and discuss the findings of the middle managers who responded to the online survey questionnaire.
Chapter Seven

UL Middle Managers and Performance Management

Analysis of survey questionnaire

April 2009
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CHAPTER SEVEN

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapters Five and Six provided an analysis of the data collected during one-to-one interviews with members of EMG and Heads of Schools and Units (SMG) respectively. This chapter provides an analysis of the data collected from level four middle managers, including Directors and Heads of Centres. Chapter Eight will then compare and contrast the data from the three populations, EMG, SMG and middle managers, seeking to identify congruence and dissonance.

7.2 THE SAMPLE

86 middle managers (level four) were identified across UL’s schools and units, of which 47 were academic staff and 39 support staff. The majority of these managers report directly to the members of UL’s Senior Managerial Group (SMG) who took part in the one-to-one interviews. An invitation to undertake the on-line semi-structured survey questionnaire was sent to all 86 managers.

In total, 44 responses (51% return) were received by the closing date. Whilst responses were received from 74% of the invited support managers, only 32% of the invited academic managers responded. However, Gillham (2000, p. 14) purports that a return of “30 per cent has to be seen as fairly satisfactory and more than 50 per cent is good.”

The following table gives a breakdown of academic and support staff respondents by gender, revealing a fairly even balance of male and female between both staff groups:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENDER</th>
<th>ACADEMIC STAFF</th>
<th>SUPPORT STAFF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.1: Total number of respondents by gender and role type

The age range of academic and support staff by number of respondents is shown in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE RANGE</th>
<th>ACADEMIC STAFF</th>
<th>SUPPORT STAFF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20 and under</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 to 30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 to 40</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 to 50</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 to 60</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61 and over</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.2: Age range of respondents by role type

It is interesting to note that there is only one manager (on the support staff side) in the 21 to 30 age bracket and none in this age group on the academic side. This seems to indicate either a lack of skill or experience of staff within this age group to operate at middle management level, or a potential prejudice to employ staff within this age group at that level. The situation does not improve on the academic side with only one such manager in the 31 to 40 group, although there are 12 managers that fall within this age group on the support side. The majority of academic managers fall within the 41 to 60 age range, which could
indicate either a reluctance to take on a ‘management role’ until much further on in the career pathway, or simply an aging work force with little injection of new blood at that level.

The length of service of all respondents is shown in the table below. The figures indicate that retention of staff is not a problem for UL.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAFF NUMBERS BY LENGTH OF SERVICE</th>
<th>ACADEMIC</th>
<th>SUPPORT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 year</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 5 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 10 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 15 years</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 to 20 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 20 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Responses:</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td><strong>29</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.3: Respondents by Length of Service.

In order to be able to compare and contrast the responses from academic and support staff, the respondents (together with their individual responses to each of the questions that required a qualitative response) were categorised and referenced anonymously as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support Managers Male: Numbers 1-12</th>
<th>SMM1</th>
<th>Academic Managers Male: Numbers 1-7</th>
<th>AMM1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support Managers Female: Numbers 13-29</td>
<td>SMF13</td>
<td>Academic Managers Female: Numbers 8-15</td>
<td>AMF8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.3 UNDERSTANDING THE TERM PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

When asked about the term performance management, there was a noticeable difference in the understanding of the phenomenon amongst UL’s middle managers, encapsulated by one support manager who said:

…one can…envisage a very different understanding of the terminology amongst colleagues within this institution. They will associate the terminology with unwanted management intervention and concepts such as "time/motion" studies. Thus, I suppose, one’s understanding of the term will very much be dependent upon one’s place in the organisation, the culture of the work environment and the levels of understanding about what the organisation seeks to achieve (SMM 1).

7.3.1 A Holistic Approach

Whilst three academic managers were not clear about what they understood the term performance management to mean: “no idea! Maybe helping people to do their work effectively”? (AMF10); “not much – could be managing one’s own performance or managing the performance of others” (AMM2), and “not a clue - its not the sort of language I would use……” (AMM3), six managers (three academic and three support) had a much fuller understanding, providing in some cases textbook responses:

Performance management is one of the tools for ensuring that an organisation is working together towards common goals and the achievement of strategy. Performance management should begin at the highest level and be cascaded down through the organisation. A front line member of staff should be able to identify how their individual goals and targets contribute to the achievement of the strategy. Performance management should provide a monitor of progress against goals and be regular, systematic and fair. In order for a performance management system to be taken seriously and implemented evenly, linking it to a rewards system can provide additional impetus (SMF27).

1. A clear mechanism for supporting the development of staff.
2. Monitor the standards of teaching
3. Track self and programme evaluation
4. To evidence best practice and specialist skills
5. A clear mechanism to address skills short comings, support issues and lecturing skills (AMF15).

…I suspect for me it is monitoring and managing all systems and outputs that are crucial to the life of this course, and making sure there is clear line management within the School and up into UL admin, and that for the team, role definition and duties for me and my staff team need to be clear and evaluated regularly (AMM3).

Pro-active management of staff performance through agreed objectives using the Staff Review and Development Scheme and linking to corporate objectives. Performance linked closely to staff development and training needs to support delivery of objectives (SMF17).

7.3.2 Performance Management and Development

Eight female support managers described the more developmental side of performance management talking of:

developing and improving performance through appraisal, training and continuous review (SMF13).

Management that is underpinned by continued and relevant training (SMF19).

coaching performance to ensure optimum output” (SMF23), and

having a planned and relevant training programme, a method for reviewing performance over a given period, reviewing and updating training needs, assessing subsequent impact of training undertaken on performance for both the employee as an individual and UL as an employer (SMF25).

Another manager pointed out that “Training is a key player in performance management because staff need to be suitably trained in order to undertake performance management and to be performance managed” (SMF29).

Interestingly, staff development and training was not referred to by any male academic or support managers and by only one female academic member of staff. Perhaps the term performance management sounds more punitive than
facilitative and therefore staff development is not something that would automatically be considered alongside – as one academic male manager wrote:

Since I’m relatively new here I am not in a position to comment on UL policy, except that I hope that it isn’t a ‘one size fits all’ approach. I lead by example, encourage, motivate and reward performance. In my experience, the big stick approach does not work over a long term period” (AMM1).

7.3.3 Improving Performance at Organisational, School/Unit and Individual Level

Armstrong and Baron (1998, p.8) talk about performance management as “being concerned with performance improvement in order to achieve organisational, team and individual effectiveness……performance is not only about what is achieved but also about how it is achieved.” However, only a few of the 44 managers were able to make any connections between performance improvements and benefits at all three levels. Instead, middle managers tended to see performance management at one particular level, for example:

7.3.3.1 Strategic/Organisational Level

17 middle managers - four academic and 13 support - (39%), talked about the alignment of individual and team objectives with strategic/organisational objectives for example “Managing the performance of individual staff against previously agreed targets which relate to personal development and the institutional targets” (AMF11).
7.3.3.2 School/Unit Level

Seven managers - four academic and three support - (16%), made the connection between individuals and school/department performance improvements “Evaluating the performance of individuals and schools against a predetermined set of criteria. The provision to take action in cases of good or poor performance” (AMF12).

7.3.3.3 Individual Level

12 managers - four academic and eight support - (27%), talked about individual performance improvements measured against objectives/targets:

Ensuring that all staff are aware of what is expected of them in their role, including any targets or measure associate with performance. Ensuring that mechanisms are in place to review performance against these expectations, to address shortcomings and recognise good practice (SMF26).

7.3.4 A Fragmented View

In general, most middle managers were able to talk about some aspect of performance management whether that related to setting goals and targets, reviewing and evaluating performance, identifying skills and tools or recognising good performance, for example:

“goals are consistently being met in an effective and efficient manner” (AMM7);

“the provision to take action in cases of good or poor performance” (AMF12) and the fact that performance management was “supported by incentives or penalties” (AMF14).

“recognising good practice” (SMF26);
“managing the performance of individuals to the benefit of the organisation and themselves – (achieving aims/goals etc) when the two combine you get the best results” (SMF21);

“UL is moving towards not only managing performance but managing people’s behaviour” (SMF15);

“quantifying performance measurement or of setting the expected performance standard” (SMM5);

“setting performance objectives for a managed area. Identifying the skills and tools required to achieve the set objectives” (SMM7);

“cohering all of the resource of an organisation or sub-unit into the achievement of key objectives. This of course presupposes adequate leadership and communication of these objectives in order to succeed” (SMM1).

Armstrong and Baron (2000) talk about performance management being strategic, concerned with performance improvement and development, and integrated so that individual and team objectives are aligned with business objectives. In addition, functional strategies are linked across different parts of the business and a coherent approach to the management and development of people is effected through HRM policy and practice. For the most, UL’s middle managers were able to demonstrate some level of understanding of the term performance management. However, there was a distinct gap in the association between performance management and staff development and the more holistic view of performance management described by Armstrong and Baron (2000). There was no mention by middle managers of HR policy and practice as part of this process.
7.4 MIDDLE MANAGERS PERCEPTIONS OF UL’S APPROACH TO PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Academic and support middle managers were asked to choose which of the statements they felt best reflected UL’s approach to performance management.

(a) A clear strategy: UL has a systematic approach, with a formal policy aligning all aspects of the performance management process;

(b) A general approach: UL has policies covering key areas such as employee development, appraisal and job evaluation, but no overall performance management strategy;

(c) A few initiatives: UL takes an ad hoc approach to performance management with policies in some areas but not others and little co-ordination overall;

(d) No policies: UL does not have any clear policies or initiatives for improving performance.

There were no middle managers that described UL’s approach to performance management as having a clear strategy and systematic approach. 32 of the 44 managers (73%) however, felt that UL takes a general approach to performance management with policies covering key areas such as employee development, appraisal and job evaluation, but with no overall performance management strategy. Of these managers, 83% were support managers compared to 54% of academic managers.
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Perceptions of UWIC’s approach to performance management (academic managers)

![Bar chart showing perceptions of UWIC’s approach to performance management for academic managers. The chart indicates a clear strategy is the most common perception, followed by a general approach, some initiatives, and no policies.]

Figure 7.1: Perceptions of UL’s approach to performance management (academic managers)

Perceptions of UWIC’s approach to performance management (support managers)

![Bar chart showing perceptions of UWIC’s approach to performance management for support managers. The chart indicates a clear strategy is the most common perception, followed by a general approach, some initiatives, and no policies.]

Figure 7.2: Perceptions of UL’s approach to performance management (support managers)
Many of UL’s performance-related policies such as capability, sickness absence, and staff review are relatively new (less than five years) and there is still some debate as to how successfully (or otherwise) they have been embedded as tools for use by managers. This may account for the 33% of academic managers and 17% of support managers thinking that UL takes an “ad hoc” approach to performance management with policies in some areas but not others and little co-ordination overall. Purcell (2004, p.12) states that:

> If we had one choice on what organizations should do to improve HR and build better links with performance, it would be improve front line effectiveness in HR. The role line managers play in people management, backed by strong values which indicate what behaviours are expected, are the core ingredients for ‘HR Advantage’ through organization process advantage (Purcell, 2004, p.12).

Two male academic managers are of the opinion that UL does not have any clear policies or initiatives for improving performance. One of these managers has been with UL for more than 20 years and the other, for less than one year. This may suggest that induction processes are not being applied consistently across the university and that managers who have been with the organisation for a long period of time are not being kept up to date.

### 7.5 The Culture

In order to build up a better feeling or understanding of the working environment, middle managers were asked to describe the culture within their school or unit. Although the results are analysed by academic and support managers, some support managers such as the Business Support Managers and Senior Technicians, work in the schools.
7.5.1 The Culture in the Schools

The academic re-structuring and convergence of nine schools into five took place in the summer of 2006, and this survey was conducted in October 2006, thus managers in schools were still in the early stages of change. The consequences of the re-structuring led some managers to comment that it was “very difficult to assess (the culture) in any meaningful way as the school has not existed for very long” (AMM7). Another stated that “Currently there is still an element of ‘wait and see’ while staff try to establish how the new management structure will work” (AMF9) and another observed that “…..It is evident that there is a merger of two quite different cultures so it will take time for the new school to settle” (AMM6).

Those middle managers who felt able to make a judgement in relation to the culture of the school, were equally positive, questioning and negative in their responses.

7.5.1.1 Positive Cultures in Schools

Positively, some managers talked about the culture in their school as:

- Excellent relations with practice based students/staff.
- Good data collection/feedback/liaison interaction.
- Management support for improvement and development of staff/programme/research.
- Good appraisal of staff and job evaluation (AMF8).

There is no official or systematic performance management (as I understand the term) but we support each other fully, share best practice and rotate admin, organisational and teaching roles. Although I have CD responsibility, most decisions are democratically made, and workload/performance issues dealt with co-operatively. On the rare occasions where problems are intractable, the problem is reported to SMPT (AMF10).
The culture in our school is proactive and challenging. We are beginning to build a team with one central visionary aim but there is some way to go. Management, ownership and understanding of the bigger picture in UL is required as a training need. More self praise is needed from within the school to celebrate our successes (SMF29).

New school, different practices. Pragmatic, voluntary approach in the past. Performance not monitored at all. New school management now conscious of benefit of better target setting (AMF14).

7.5.1.2 Obstacles to Positive Cultures in Schools

Some managers felt that most staff in their particular school were familiar with the concept of performance management because it was something that was embedded in primary and secondary schools. However, despite this acceptance of performance management, they identified past difficulties in promulgating a positive culture:

…until now we have had little opportunity within the school to make the crucial link between staff reviews and performance management as until recently it was not necessarily the line manager conducting staff reviews. Therefore almost impossible to get direct accountability. This might improve with new management system (AMF13).

…processes in UL and therefore the school seem to be constantly changing and often have little impact on the personal development of individual staff or the development of the school. I feel that this sometimes happens on an ad hoc basis. I would also imagine that it is something that is potentially threatening to some staff rather than being seen as an opportunity to be supported in carrying out one’s responsibilities and taking control of professional development (AMF11).

7.5.1.3 Negative Cultures in Schools

Other managers were more negative in their responses when it came to describing the culture in their school:

Under huge stress but attempting to be very efficient: mood from the top that you are always inadequate: little praise: impatience:
managing under impossible conditions with no sense of a support from top management of UL. From there it feels like a blame culture and a bean counter culture that shows little understanding of the realities of our educational cultures and what is valued by students and our stakeholders. The mood culture comes from the top (AMM3).

Confused. We have recruited well this year in our section, substantial number of PHD completions and consultancy, but yet our funding has been reduced - what reward for performance? (AMM4).

Interestingly, support staff managers working in the schools were the most disparaging about the culture making statements such as:

There is no cohesive culture within the school, except dissidence. There is a general view amongst the academic staff that they are unmanageable and they seem to work hard to make this is a self-fulfilling prophecy. There are a core of staff who work very hard to make the school a success and who take on additional responsibility to make this happen but the lack of performance management means that good performance often goes unrewarded which can leave staff feeling under-valued and demotivated (SMF27).

Stressed and with a complete lack of communication at all levels of management. The school has become disjointed since the merger of A and B and is being managed ineffectively (SMM5).

one where people are reluctant to ‘manage’ or be managed and assume that academic privilege - such as a history of being granted flexible working, working from home etc - means they are exempt from having their performance managed formally against the strategic and operational priorities of the School and of UL (SMF22).

7.5.1.4 Cultures within Cultures

Middle managers also describe cultures within cultures or mixed cultures within their schools. One manager wrote that “staff teams create their own cultures” (AMM2). Another manager talks of the culture in their school as having:

……Inadequate sharing of programme content, approaches and best practice; Imbalanced approach to the support of individual
programmes within a school; Overload of administrative demands on programme leaders (AMF15).

Whilst at the same time, describing the culture within her unit (within the school) as having “...Good communication on teaching and learning; Good shared knowledge of the teaching of colleagues” (AMF15) suggesting that there is more of a cohesive framework of mutual working at the micro rather than macro level. One support manager working within a school talks about “mixed” cultures, going on to describe the complicated behaviours of academic and support staff both new to the organisation and long-serving.

The emerging research culture means that a culture of individualism is rising (research performance is primarily based on the endeavours of individuals and upon their status and reputation within their research field (peer-reviewed); therefore, such individuals are able to command more attention in pursuit of their individual objectives……other academic staff are divided into two categories. The 'new' academic, team-orientated, supportive of new learning and teaching challenges (e.g. PDPs; peer-reviewed teaching) and the 'older' academic who is protective of individual autonomy and resistant to the systems approach used increasingly to measure output (rather than outcome) of education. Support staff have a different culture; many are 'old school' long-serving members of staff and do not seem to realise that competition within the Sector has increased exponentially, therefore, their activity remains at a constant unchanging pace; others, primarily newer staff, are more willing to accept change; but tend to become disenchanted with the difficulties of implementing change and either leave; or sink into 'old school' style (SMM4).

7.5.2 Cultures in Units

Support managers that worked in more stable environments described cultures across the spectrum:
7.5.2.1 Positive Cultures in Units

Positive comments about the performance management culture within units, were provided by seven male support managers who talked about having a culture that was:

“Team based/objective led” (SMM12).

“...target driven and appraised against our targets” (SMM11).

“Task oriented with an emphasis on quality and timeliness” (SMM10).

“Professional, motivated and flexible to change” (SMM3).

“A team orientated culture with input from all members encouraged and appreciated “(SMM2).

...“openness, development and targeted achievement” (SMM1).

“I feel that there is a good culture in our unit” (SMM6).

7.5.2.2 Intermediate Views on Cultures in Units

In contrast to the male support managers, the female support managers presented a more intermediate view, using less positive language such as:

“Reasonably supportive” (SMF19).

“Fairly inflexible in terms of part-time/job-share work” (SMF18).

“Keen on staff development but little formalised process” (SMF13).

“a constructive and open approach is encouraged” (SMF17).

“In my unit as a whole there is a reasonable approach to performance management but this tends to then vary within its sub-sections: some having a very pro-active approach and others a negligible performance management culture” (SMF25).
7.5.2.3 Negative Cultures in Units

Conversely, a female support manager talked about the effects of poor performance on the culture:

There is a great deal of poor performance which is very difficult to tackle - this de-motivates the strong performers within the area. Many managers who have been in the organisation for a long period have tried to tackle this previously and have had little support, therefore the processes seem pointless. There is very little that can be offered to good performers to motivate them further. There is a lot of effort put in by managers and staff for small returns, a lot of time is spent on meetings to go through the motions of having a structure but the results do not reflect the amount of time spent by all parties on this (SMF20).

Culture is an important element of successful performance management. Academic and support managers at UL report both positive and negative cultures within schools and units, as well as cultures within cultures. The Cabinet Office (2004, p.34) claim that having a “can do culture, inspired by strong leadership” as well as a strong sense of vision and clear direction where staff are encouraged to try new approaches, are characteristics displayed by high performing organisations. In addition, the IiP standard, Charter Mark and the HSE standards are all specifically designed to engender a culture of continuous improvement in organisations that adopt them.

7.6 COMMUNICATING PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS TO UL STAFF

Middle managers were asked how they determine and communicate their performance requirements/expectations to staff within their area of responsibility.
7.6.1 A Holistic Approach

In relation to determining performance requirements/expectations, several managers outlined a systematic and strategic approach for example:

\[
\text{I determine my requirements by reviewing previous performance and ensuring I am working towards the overall unit strategy. This is undertaken with all other managers within the unit along with the Head of Unit. I then produce a strategy for my area working with my team members and allocating areas to each individual, all with start, review and completion dates (SMM6).}
\]

\[
\text{Collation of all data - resources, student attendance/retention, results. Individual and team meeting/discussions and written feedback. Set aims/targets/goals/outcomes (short and long term). Assess and review (AMF8).}
\]

\[
\text{The service has an overall plan, to which all staff contribute. Individual personal plans, with specific targets, are derived from the overall plan and these are reviewed on an ongoing basis..... (SMF26).}
\]

7.6.2 Main Methods of Communication

The majority of middle managers (23 support managers and 11 academic managers), talked about how they communicated their performance requirements/expectations describing a variety of informal mechanisms such as staff/team meetings, one-to-one meetings, e-mail, regular reviews and discussions, management by walking about (MBWA), and holding staff away days.

Less than 50 per cent of middle managers however (13 support and 5 academic) mentioned UL’s SRDS as a means of determining and communicating performance expectations, and of those managers two stated that they were waiting for a new scheme to be introduced. Only two of the 44
managers mentioned induction as a process that they use for this purpose and only one of the 44 managers mentioned the probationary period as a process for agreeing expectations and monitoring performance.

Academic managers also talked of communicating expectations/requirements through more formal academic mechanisms such as course committees, exam committees, using data such as student attendance, retention and results, workload and timetabling meetings and module content planning. They also portrayed a more communal way of working “we operate on mutual trust and agreement as equals” (AMM6), “…..there is also a culture of shared values which makes discussion and problem-solving relatively easy” (AMF10) and:

We are a very close team: there is a lot of mutual respect and trust and a shared culture about quality and educational delivery philosophy. We have been together for quite some time and performance quality and expectation are simply understood. Most of us can multi task and cover for each other. We are physically close in that all our work spaces are close and we are in the middle of the student action. We are in regular contact and are comfortable pointing up poor performance if we feel this is so (AMM3).

7.6.3 Managers without Staff

Several managers within the target group (two male support managers) were not line managers in that they were not responsible for any staff per se. Nevertheless they were responsible for achieving a number of high level organisational targets which did involve the “coaxing, coaching and influencing of staff at all levels within UL” (SMM1) and “communicating expectations directly with them preferably and for the most part, face to face” (SMM2). SMM1 explained how this worked in practice:
This is managed.... through open discussion about the expected end result and a process of deliberation as to how this will be achieved. Key milestones are set and this ensures that deadlines are met. Poor performance, usually expressed in non-compliance (understandable too given the multiplicity of demands upon peoples time and the, often, beaurocratic nature of our requests), is dealt with in the first instance through conversation and e-mail coaxing. This is elevated to line management in the unusual instances where progress is impossible (SMM1).

7.6.4 Issues with Authority

Academic managers (two male and two female) had some different problems. One had “only just taken on this role so have no experience of this as yet” (AMF11) and two others were somewhat concerned about their level of authority within the role, in relation to determining and communicating expectations:

As a Programme Director I do not feel I have authority to instruct my colleagues with work directives or the like. We operate based on mutual trust and agreement as equals (AMM6).

As Director of Enterprise I have a particular difficulty with this (which we have acknowledged and discussed at MPT). I can give staff clear expectations about involvement in particular enterprise activity - but by the very nature of this work for most staff, these activities are peripheral (or additional) to their main job/role. For those few staff who have exclusively enterprise remits then it is easier to clarify role descriptions, expectations and performance requirements, by for example setting clear goals and deadlines (AMF13).

The fourth explained that he was “Not required to do so - and have not been directed to do so” (AMM4).

There is some evidence of three of the 44 middle managers taking a strategic approach to communicating performance requirements/expectations using a strategy or school/unit plan as a starting point and then cascading requirements
through a process of objective setting and targets. However, it is not clear as to how many middle managers might have some responsibility for determining performance requirements/expectations at a strategic level and how many might purely be responsible for cascading and monitoring requirements/expectations that have already been set at a higher level.

The importance of the manager’s role in departmental induction cannot be underestimated - it is an ideal opportunity to make clear any responsibilities and to “reconcile expectations on both sides” (Thomson, 2002, p.68). Dessler (2000, p. 249) describes this part of the induction or orientation as:

*Part of the employer’s new-employee socialization process…of instilling in all employees the prevailing attitudes, standards, values and patterns of behaviour that are expected by the organisation and its departments……and to encourage new employees to engage in those activities that will enable each to ‘learn the ropes’ and become productive as quickly as possible”*

However (Rankin, 2006) found that many organisations do not brief their line managers adequately in relation to the importance of them investing quality time in the induction process; neither do they invest in training their line managers in the skills and techniques required to carry out an effective induction. This might explain why only two of the 44 managers mention induction as a process that can be used for setting out and communicating performance expectations/requirements.

Similarly, although probationary arrangements are in place in most HEIs (including UL), only one manager made reference to the process. This again, seems to indicate that probation is not seen by middle managers as an
important means of communicating expectations. Probation is critical in terms of formally monitoring performance against organisational criteria and the willingness or inability to address/identify performance issues exacerbates the problem, potentially creating a situation where poor performers obtain permanent posts by default. Employees have a responsibility to demonstrate acceptable levels of performance, but employers must make clear their expectations, set reasonable objectives and provide training and development and supervision to assist them in doing this. The probationary period is also a time for employees to appraise the organisation.

Performance appraisal is “a well-established way of providing milestones, feedback, guidance and monitoring for staff. A further development….is tying this appraisal into a larger and more complex system of performance management” (Weightman, 1999, p.200). The CIPD (2008) support the view that whilst performance appraisal is an important part of performance management, it is only one tool amongst a range of tools that can be used to manage performance. They also highlight that because performance appraisals are most usually carried out by the line managers, rather than HR professionals, it is important that they understand their role in the process and have the right skills to conduct them effectively. The staff appraisal/review process is mentioned by less than 50% of UL’s middle managers. This is considerably less when compared to Suff’s (2006) findings which show that 88.7% of managers use the performance appraisal/review process as a means of communicating their expectations. The 4.5% of UL managers who mentioned induction as a
method of communication is also significantly lower than the 50.5% shown in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method of Communication</th>
<th>% of Employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formally, through the performance management process</td>
<td>88.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informally, but regularly, by line managers</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through the induction process</td>
<td>50.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through the organisation's competency framework</td>
<td>39.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through reward schemes</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7.3: Communicating performance expectations (Suff, 2006, p.4)

Induction, probation and staff appraisal/review are all key performance management tools and whilst middle managers are able to give plenty of examples of informal methods they use to communicate expectations, there could be lost opportunities with less than 50 per cent of managers talking about staff appraisal/review and only one or two talking about induction and probation.

7.7 MEASURING AND REPORTING ON UL STAFF PERFORMANCE

One manager stated that “performance is not currently measured or reported and poor performance is managed by exception” (SMF27). Another manager was of the opinion that “this is perhaps where we would benefit from having a more formalised policy” (SMF16). Nevertheless, the majority of middle managers were able to talk about a comprehensive range of measures in place within their schools and units, albeit academic and support managers have different types of measures that they use to report on performance.
7.7.1 Strategic Performance Measures

One support manager working in a school, although unsure of how individual performance was linked with the strategic aims, described how performance is measured, monitored and reported on at a strategic level within the school against 12 key areas:

1. Student intake (measured against targets)
2. Employability of students.
3. Progression of students.
4. Quality of courses (via professional accreditation/review and University-level reviews (APR, Quinquennial Review, QAA Institutional Review).
5. Relevance of courses with industry bodies (sometimes via professional accreditation; sometimes through feedback meetings with representatives of the NHS).
7. Level of students admitted from low participation neighbourhoods.
9. Profits derived from research and enterprise activity.
10. Level of staff absence.
11. Level of staff/student complaints.
12. Level of other complaints (contention ratio?). Individual: Not known. At the moment we do not yet have a mechanism which links these strategic aims with team goals and individual objectives (SMM4)

were no other middle managers who made reference to performance measures at this strategic level.

7.7.2 Operational Performance Measures

At an operational level, academic managers within schools utilise a number of methods through which to measure and report on performance. These primarily relate to the work that they do, for example:

Annual course reports and all their statistical measurements. Quinquennial reviews: Course committees: to School Management Planning Team meeting when requested. All L+T and research committee meetings. Collate views as UCU rep from staff in other programmes and bring to School management (AMM3).

Programme strengths/weaknesses. Response to External Examiners' reports and team review ideas. Quality of degree results and end of year showcase. Professional liaison with consultants/contemporary practitioners. Student/staff meetings, Staff reviews and informal peer review; Student written feedback/meetings; Programme committee meetings; Annual programme report/progress report (AMF8).

Staff complete module evaluation reports for every module that they deliver. These reports include reflection on things that went well and those that didn't. Staff annual reviews, Peer reviews, Learning and teaching meetings, Annual course reports (AMM17).

However, one academic manager implied that it was difficult to link the higher level measures with individuals because of the current management arrangements stating that:

With the recent re-structuring, and merger of two schools, we have just created new centres within the School and have now identified line management responsibilities within those centres. This should give more opportunity to measure and report on performance using appropriate evidence e.g. for a Programme Director we might use, recruitment targets, students evaluations, external examiner reports etc. (AMF13).

Support managers also measured and reported on performance at an operational level and again, as with academic staff, the measures that they used, primarily related to the work that they did, and are therefore reflective of their specific areas of operation, for example:

As we are financially driven our end of year accounts are the main indicator of our performance (SMM9).

Since I am largely responsible for marketing staff, however, performance is usually monitored in terms of target numbers and
enrolment figures as well as how well individual staff members have responded to strategies set for various markets (SMF16).

Externally funded contracts with quantitative targets reviewed monthly and reported quarterly to HEFCW (SMF26).

Performance is measured, by parental satisfaction sheets, which are given out at the end of each term, these give us an insight into whether we are providing the right level of service. Any issues arising from these is discussed among the staff and any changes implemented. Changes are notified in the parent newsletter (SMF28).

7.7.3 Common Forms of Measurement

Common forms of measuring and reporting were discussed by 23 support managers and 11 academic managers. These methods included the use of one-to-one meetings, staff meetings, questionnaires and focus groups to elicit feedback from both internal and external customers, mid year reviews, spend against budget, internal and external audits and regular managers meetings where “concerns and developments are discussed and action points identified” (SMF19). 13 support managers (44%) and five academic managers (33.3%) also stated that they used the staff performance review scheme as a tool for measuring and reporting on performance.

As with the responses to determining and communicating performance requirements/expectations, it is unclear as to how many middle managers are involved at a strategic level vis a vis measuring and reporting on performance. Only one manager is able to comment at that level, whilst the remaining 43 managers use an eclectic range of operational measures as a means of reporting. Measuring and reporting on performance is not a straight forward process that everyone can agree on and it is argued that some things simply
cannot be measured. The Cranfield School of Management, (2007, p.5) also make the point that:

*Performance measurement includes the development of strategies or objectives, and the taking of actions to improve performance based on the insight provided by the performance measures. This blurs the distinction between performance measurement and performance management.*

The Audit Commission (2000) outline six principles underlying effective performance measurement, one of which includes having ‘Clarity of Purpose’ so that stakeholders including managers, understand who requires what information and for which purpose. Understanding these requirements allows organisations to develop meaningful indicators or measures which can help individuals or groups to, inter alia make better decisions, benchmark against other organisations, ensure that objectives are being met, monitor the maintenance of standards and identify areas of poor performance. A CUC survey (2006, p.19) found “many institutions are still at a relatively early stage of development of KPIs; while a few have invested considerable thought and effort into the subject (but may not necessarily yet have fully reached a satisfactory position)”. Despite this, a small number of institutions were found to be using the EFQM model and the Balanced Scorecard as a means of assessing organisational performance.

In order to assist the Governing bodies, a ‘Top Ten’ list of high level KPIs was developed with an aim of encapsulating the most critical areas of performance for an institution. However, middle managers will not have been aware of this list of KPIs since it was published in November 2006 and this survey took place in October 2006.
The Audit Commission (2000) advise that any performance measurement system needs to be aligned with the performance management system of an organisation and that there needs to be a cascading communication channel through the different levels (from top to bottom and bottom to top) so that managers and staff can understand how they make a contribution (through the work that they do), to the operational effectiveness and overall performance of the organisation which is measured through national indicators. There were no managers who made reference to UL’s use of the Balanced Scorecard (BSC).

The Audit Commission (2000), also stress the importance of translating strategy into practice through the development of SMART objectives – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timed which afford staff a greater degree of ownership. There were no UL managers who talked about the use of SMART objectives and yet the setting of SMART objectives is a key component of UL’s SRDS.

7.8 REWARDING UL STAFF FOR GOOD PERFORMANCE

Middle managers were asked to describe how they recognised good performance at individual/team level. The question however, seemed to cause confusion, mainly amongst seven academic managers, who described the sorts of qualities or tasks they would be looking for in relation to good performance. The remainder, including the support managers described how they acknowledged and rewarded good performance (which was the intention of the question). Two managers (one academic and one support manager working in
a school) felt they were unable to respond to the question adequately as they had only recently taken on the role of manager:

I have only been a manager for one month. I have not yet had the opportunity to meet all of the staff to develop a working system for setting performance standards and as such have not yet had to recognise good or bad performances (SMM5).

7.8.1 Qualities Sought in Good Performance

Four academic managers wrote about the sorts of qualities they felt equated to good performance, using descriptions such as “dedication, communication, thoroughness, quality of outcomes” (AMM2), “…is well presented and represents the group and university, is proactive in attracting funds” (AMM1). They also wrote about meeting objectives and targets relating to time and quantity and measuring progress against agreed actions. Other qualities identified included:

Involvement in the work of the school. Commitment to priorities within the school. A knowledge and understanding of the wider professional context in which they work. A readiness and eagerness to engage in professional development. Working to deadlines. Contributing to a team (AMF11).

1. Teaching Preparation (content), organisation, punctuality etc 2. Use of Blackboard 3. Comprehensive notation of students work and student feedback 4. Student module evaluation and tutorials 5. Staff module evaluation 6. End of year meetings to discussion module evaluation and possible moderations with the team (AMF15).

7.8.2 Rewarding Good Performance

25 managers (18 support and seven academic) wrote about praising individuals or teams for their good work or achievement:
…..I would do this by making sure that I let individuals/the team know that they've done a good job - a simple well done goes a long way (SMF15).

General approach to constantly praise and thank team members when things get done to expected standards and even if not to standard, if they are doing their best under trying circumstances (AMM3).

SMF15 and AMM3 felt that it was also important to acknowledge staff, particularly where people had tried their hardest and yet not succeeded due to adverse circumstances beyond their control. SMF15 went on to say:

…..It's important that people feel valued and I try to ensure that my colleagues know that I value them. This has to be demonstrated by my interactions with people and the way that I treat them. It's counter-productive to tell people that they're valued when actions and the way in which people are treated belie this (SMF15).

Academic and support managers deployed on a number of methods for acknowledging and rewarding staff: Praise was also given verbally face-to-face in one-to-one or team meetings, or through written feedback such as a group e-mail, writing favourable probation reports, “good references” (AMM4), or “achievements acknowledged in the minutes of meetings” (AMF9). Other means of thanking staff included the following:

- I also find that chocolate and cake work well 😊 (SMF15).
- I put forward Awards for Excellence forms (SMF29).
- Our end of year team meeting is also a key part of how we communicate team performance (SMM9).
- Give them responsibility (SMF21).
- ….Chocolate, biscuits or a hand-made ‘super-star’ badge (AMF10).
- Occasionally go out for meals which I pay for (SMF24).
Three support managers talked about recognising good performance through staff development:

I encourage individuals to look at their career development and their personal goals and to take opportunities to learn and develop new skills whenever the opportunity arises (SMF20).

Try to find/create opportunities for staff to develop, find money for them to go to external events (SMF21).

Support for relevant training/staff development (SMF17).

Cole (2002, p.248) describes the rationale behind pay and reward systems as being:

- To attract sufficient and suitable employees
- To retain employees who are satisfactory
- To reward employees for effort, loyalty, experience and achievement.

Pointon and Ryan (2004, p.518) suggest that “reward systems form part of the employees’ notion of organisational justice and as such underlie a sense of loyalty”. They also stress that whilst an organisation’s base pay should be at the heart of the reward strategy, variable and indirect rewards should also form part of the total compensation package. Research by Herriot et al. (1997), identified that amongst other things, employees expected the employer to provide a safe and amiable working environment, job security, induction, staff development, flexible working and fair recruitment, appraisal, promotion and redundancy policies and procedures. In return, the organisation expects its employees to work the hours they have been contracted to work, consistently perform their work to high standards (both in quality and quantity), demonstrate loyalty and commitment to the organisation through the way they deal with...
situations, customers, and company property and to conduct all their business in a honest and professional manner.

The majority of middle managers though, seemed unaware of some of the wider issues concerning reward as an integrated approach to HRM, although three support managers did make reference to training and development as a means of rewarding staff. This may have been caused through some misunderstanding over the way the question was phrased, but for those that did respond as intended, there was no mention of safe and amiable working environments, job security, flexible working, pay (including additional supplements) or any other organisational benefits that UL provides. In August 2006, the majority of UL staff received significant pay increases and annual leave entitlements as part of the NFA.

On the other hand, UL academic and support managers appear to be adept at praising and thanking staff in the workplace using a number of conventional and sometimes more innovative ways. The CIPD (2004) highlight the importance of indirect rewards advocating the important role of non-financial rewards such as recognition and personal and career development.

7.9 MANAGING THE POOR PERFORMANCE OF UL STAFF
Middle managers were asked to describe how they currently manage poor performance at individual/team level.
7.9.1 A Rare Occurrence

Having to manage poor performance is described by two academic managers as “very rare” (AMM2) and (AMF10). Another comments:

I am not directly responsible for my colleagues' performance at individual level but may have to deal with issues raised through course committee by student reps (AMM6).

7.9.2. Investigating the Problem

Where poor performance is an issue, ten support managers (34%) and eight academic managers (53%) stated that they would need to investigate and/or discuss with the individual the reasons or underlying causes of the poor performance in the first instance. Following on from this, one manager talks about the need to “revisit performance targets to ensure that they are reasonable/achievable”, (SMM3) another of perhaps providing a “better explanation of the task” (SMM10) and another who states that:

If there are failures then it is due frequently to work overload or being asked to do things beyond their competence. This then requires either training or re-delegating the task to someone who can cope. (AMM3)

7.9.2.1 Common Methods of Investigation

Seven academic managers (46%) and 20 support managers (69%) most commonly used one-to-one meetings to deal with individual issues of underperformance or team meetings to deal with issues of team performance:

I would speak to the person concerned at an informal meeting to explain our expectations and requirements (AMF10).

On an individual level, I would arrange a one-to-one with the person concerned, establish whether there any contributory factors that I need to know about. Ascertain the individual's assessment of his/her own performance, whether the person knows what is expected of them, make sure objectives are realistic and identify
any training gaps. Once that is established, it's a case of being honest - what I'm not happy with and what I require to improve performance (SMF15).

SMF21 makes the point that it is crucial to try and tackle issues of poor performance before they become ingrained.

### 7.9.3 Management Style and Process

Two managers (one academic and one support) identify management style as being important when dealing with issues of poor performance:

*Working to people's strengths is the key. We are not all Leonardo da Vincis. I don't actually have to overtly manage, since all the team are conscious of quality and performance standards and thus you don't have to chide and monitor....its not my style to lead overtly from the front. We are a cooperative. Of course sometimes a lead is necessary and I give it* (AMM3).

*Try to create positive opportunities first for them to respond too and encourage them to do this i.e. trust them to do/achieve something* (SMF21).

Five academic managers inferred that the Dean of School or Head of Department would be involved in interviewing the member of staff who is underperforming and that cases of underperformance would be referred up the line to the Dean of School or Head of Department if they could not be satisfactorily resolved at the lower level:

*“I would warn the person concerned that he/she was not carrying out their function satisfactorily and if the situation did not improve, then I might need to bring this to the attention of my line manager”* (AMF13).

*“I have had to counsel colleagues on issues/complaints on a one-to-one basis but ultimately they may need to be resolved by my Head of School”* (AMM6).

*“Usually interviews combined with the Dean and HOD”* (AMM5).
7.9.4 Establishing Clear Expectations

Three female support managers and three female academic managers wrote about the importance of establishing clear expectations:

- *Quickly and fairly draw attention to gaps between my expectation and staff performance/outputs on any day-to-day issues* (SMF22).

- *If I was then confident that the person was able to carry out the tasks and clearly understood the remit then I would put (in place) very clear goals and deadlines and monitor closely that these were achieved* (AMF13).

- *I document my expectations of change* (SMF29).

- *Needs to be based on hard evidence and not anecdotal evidence* (AMF11).

7.9.5 Staff Training and Development

SMF29 identified a need for training the next level of managers below (level 5) as a means of proactively managing poor performance at individual and team level:

- *However, predominantly I have a need for staff who line manage other staff to be trained on how to manage poor performance as there is a layer between myself and the individual(s) that needs to be better prepared on how to handle poor performance and monitor progress and indeed in some cases actually take responsibility for this* (SMF29).

7.9.6 Supporting Systems and Processes

Only one of the 44 managers makes reference to using the probation period to raise issues of poor performance (SMF18); only two of the 44 managers (female academics AMF8 and AMF14) make any reference to the fact that they would involve Human Resources when dealing with issues of poor performance and only four of the 44 middle managers (support managers SMM4, SMF20, SMF22 and SMF26) make any reference to UL’s formal Capability procedure,
although one academic female does make the point that “up to now I do not think we have been supported by UL systems in being able to incorporate a real performance management system” (AMF13). Sickness absence as a performance issue was not mentioned by any of the 44 academic or support middle managers.

These are all fairly critical omissions, but it may be the case that middle managers are not aware of or do not understand the intricacies of managing poor performance and are therefore not tapping into specialist advice.

An Investors in People survey (IIIP UK, 2005) found that 39 per cent of managers complain that it is employees who are not pulling their weight – and half of employees concur, stating that they work directly with someone who does not do their fair share of the work. However, 40 per cent of employees say that their manager is turning a blind eye and does not take any action to address the issue. Issues of poor performance can often lead to discontent amongst other staff when they can see that they are not being dealt with “there is a great deal of poor performance which is difficult to tackle – this demotivates the strong performers within the area” (SMF20).

There was a distinct sense that middle managers were either not confident in their skills to manage poor performance (although over two thirds of them reported that they were), or that they were not sufficiently aware of their responsibilities or of what they should be doing. Some academic managers made reference to referring the problem up the line to the Dean of School or
Head of Department and a support manager made reference to training up the managers below to deal with issues of poor performance. Scant reference was made to the use of any of UL’s performance management tools such as staff appraisal/review, induction, probation, training and development or capability, and sickness absence was not mentioned at all. There was no mention of any of the types of underperformance identified by Suff (2006) such as poor standard of work, poor timekeeping or poor attitude.

7.10 CONFIDENCE IN OWN SKILLS FOR DEALING WITH POOR PERFORMANCE

Academic and support managers were asked to self assess their confidence in their own skills to tackle issues of individual/team poor performance. There were four categories to select from: I am very confident; I am confident; I am not very confident and I am not at all confident.

![Confidence in own skills for dealing with poor performance](image)

**Figure 7.4: Confidence in skills for dealing with poor performance**
Whilst only three of the 44 managers (all support managers) stated that they were very confident, the majority of both academic (80%) and support managers (72%) stated they were ‘confident’ in their skills to tackle poor performance. However, 20% of academic and 17% of support declared that they were ‘not very confident’. This may indicate a training need, but further investigation would be required to establish the precise requirement. There were no managers who self assessed as being ‘not at all confident’ and upon reflection one would have to question whether realistically any of them would want to admit to this!

Despite over two thirds of UL’s managers (33%) reporting that they were confident in their skills for dealing with poor performance, Suff (2006) found that over two thirds of employers do not rate their line managers as either confident or competent. Close investigation would be needed to establish why the perceptions of the employer and middle managers are incongruent.

7.11 TACKLING ISSUES OF POOR PERFORMANCE

Having assessed their levels of confidence in dealing with issues of individual/team poor performance, managers were asked to consider how their level of confidence impacted upon the way in which they tackled issues of individual/team poor performance. Managers were asked to select the statements which most closely represented their actions. A comparison between academic and support staff is shown in the table below:
Table 7.4: Tackling issues of poor performance, academic and support managers

73% and 72% of academic and support staff managers respectively consider that tackling issues of individual/team poor performance is part of their role. Two academic managers (one male, one female) do not consider that tackling issues of poor performance is part of their role and made this clear at the beginning of the survey “I am not directly responsible for my colleagues’ performance at an individual level…” (AMM6) and “I don’t have to overtly manage, since all the team are conscious of quality and performance standards and thus you don’t have to chide and monitor….we are a cooperative…” (AMM3).
Many managers (46% academic and 37% support) dislike tackling issues of poor performance, although 60% and 48% respectively felt supported in doing so by their line manager/human resources. More support managers (62%) always tackle issues of poor performance compared to academic managers (20%).

The level of academic and support managers stating that they ‘always’ tackle issues of poor performance (48%) is low considering it constitutes part of the management role, however, it corresponds with the findings of Walker (2007), where 48% of senior managers complained that middle managers were failing to address issues of underperformance within their teams.

Three times as many support managers tackle issues of poor performance, when compared with academic managers (62% and 20% respectively). This could be attributed to the higher education sector being traditionally less management driven than other sectors, indeed, “many academics who take on managerial responsibilities consider it a career inhibiting period since it distracts their attention away from teaching and research” (PCS Limited 2002, p.22). Additionally, as Hutchinson and Purcell (2007, p.10) assert “some managers lack the appropriate skills and find it hard to differentiate performance or dislike having a ‘difficult conversation’. Managers may resent the bureaucracy involved, find it time consuming, or simply lack commitment”.

What is evident, is that many academic and support managers dislike having to tackle issues of poor performance (46% and 37% respectively) perhaps
because it is likely to involve “difficult situations, conflicts, embarrassment, and negative feelings” (Thomas et al. 2002, p.32).

7.12 ACTIONS TAKEN IN RELATION TO PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Managers were presented with ten different best practice statements relating to performance management. They were asked to firstly assess the extent to which they carried out each of the statements and then to determine how important they thought each statement was in relation to managing performance. To record this, they were asked to select the column that came closest to their views. The results are shown in the Table 7.6.
Table 7.5: Actions taken in relation to performance management

7.12.1 Promoting the Vision

All middle managers indicated that they promote UL’s vision, mission, ethos and values through the work they do, 48% ‘always’, 45% ‘often’ and 7% ‘sometimes’. Whilst 64% of managers felt this was ‘very important’ and 32% ‘important’; only 5% (2 managers) felt it was ‘not important’. Purcell (2003, p.13) contends that successful organisations have “a clear sense of mission
underpinned by values and a culture expressing what the firm is and its relationship with its customers and employees”. This feature, which he named “The Big Idea” (Purcell 2003, p.13) was found to be embedded throughout the organisations and the company values were encapsulated in the work that was done and the way that people behaved – “a sort of glue binding people and processes together” (Purcell 2003, p.13). The promotion of UL’s vision, mission ethos and values through the work of the middle managers is a positive finding.

7.12.2 Working to Clear Objectives

50% of responding managers stated that they ‘always’ have clear objectives and targets to work to each year, which are agreed by themselves and their line managers compared to 7% who do not. The remaining 43% ‘often’ or ‘sometimes’ have clear objectives. Only 9% of managers thought having clear objectives and targets were ‘not important’ compared to 91% who thought they were. HM Treasury (2001), stress the importance of translating strategy into practice through the development of SMART objectives – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timed which afford staff a greater degree of ownership. Whilst 91% of UL middle managers felt it was ‘important/very important’ to have clear objectives and targets to work to each year, which are agreed by themselves and their line managers, the levels of those actually having clear objectives, suggests a lost opportunity in terms of managing performance.
7.12.3 Reviewing Business Processes

41% of managers always review their business processes in order to ensure efficiency and effectiveness. 32% do this ‘often’ and 23% ‘sometimes do this’. Purcell (2003) evidenced that the way that HR Policies are enacted by line managers is critical. Over the last ten years or so line managers have been given greater responsibility for HR management and the quality of the employment relationship is evermore crucial in securing (or not securing) high levels of job satisfaction and organisational commitment. The management style – the way line managers control or direct what people do, how they live “The Big Idea” (Purcell 2003, p.13) and their ability to translate the HR policies into best practice are all factors that can spark discretionary behaviour. The low level of UL middle managers engaging in a regular review of their processes, does not guarantee high levels of efficiency and effectiveness.

7.12.4 Setting Individual or Team Objectives

Although 50% of middle managers stated that they ‘always’ have clear objectives and targets to work to each year, only 25% of them ‘always’ set their own individuals/teams SMART objectives to work to. 16% ‘never’ set their individuals/teams that they are responsible for SMART objectives to work to although 20% of managers ‘sometimes’ do this. 14% of managers did not think that setting SMART objectives for their individuals/teams to work to was important and one manager ‘didn’t know’. It is difficult to see how middle managers who do not set clear objectives for their staff, expect their staff to be able to perform at optimum levels.
7.12.5 Monitoring Performance against Objectives

Where SMART objectives were in place, managers were able to monitor individual/team performance against them. However, as this equates to less than 50% of managers, it presents a lost opportunity to manage performance effectively.

7.12.6 Praising Good Performance

89% of managers felt that it was ‘very important’ to praise good performance at individual/team level. 66% of managers ‘always’ praised good performance and 32% ‘often’ did. The CIPD (2004), highlight the importance of indirect rewards stating that:

Organisations now treat performance management as a key part of a total reward approach in which pay is only one element. The focus is on non-financial rewards such as recognition, constructive feedback, personal development and career opportunities. These have a much more important role than pay in encouraging engagement and productive discretionary behaviour.

With 98% of middle managers ‘always and often’ praising good performance, this can be regarded as good practice.

7.12.7 Taking Remedial Action

100% of managers identified that it was ‘very important/important’ to take remedial action when they identified poor performance at either individual or team level, however, only 43% of managers ‘always’ did this with 41% ‘often’ taking action and the remaining 16% taking action ‘sometimes’. Whilst UL middle managers felt it was ‘important/very important’ to take remedial action once areas of poor performance had been identified, the failure to act is a lost opportunity to rectify any shortcomings. These findings triangulate with the
findings in section 7.9 in relation to how middle managers tackle issues of poor individual or team performance.

7.12.8 Collecting and Analysing Relevant Data

Whilst 95% of managers felt it was ‘very important/important’ to collect and analyse relevant data in order that they can monitor and report on performance, managers actually carried this out to varying extents - 30% ‘always’, 36% ‘often’ and 32% ‘sometimes’. The Cabinet Office (2004, p.34) purports that high performing organisations are able to collect valid and real-time data. They then invest significant resource into analysing the data so that strengths and weaknesses can be identified and action can be taken before smaller issues grow into larger problems. The performance data is then publicised internally and externally and assists in measuring, monitoring and showcasing organisational improvements. Whilst UL middle managers felt it was important/very important to collect and analyse relevant data, the levels of action reflect a level of lost opportunity.

7.12.9 Seeking Stakeholder Views

Seeking the views of stakeholders in order to inform the work of the school/unit was carried out ‘always’ by 30% of managers ‘often’ by 41% of managers and ‘sometimes’ by 25%. 91% of managers felt that engagement with stakeholders was ‘very important/important’. The Audit Commission (2000) contend that stakeholder requirements are different for different groups of stakeholders and it is important to make clear from the outset, what those requirements are. Effective communication channels are also required so that managers and staff
can understand how they make a contribution to the operational effectiveness and overall performance of the organisation which is measured through national indicators. Whilst UL middle managers felt it was ‘important/very important’ to seek stakeholders’ views in order to inform the work of the school/unit, the level of in-action suggests a lost opportunity.

7.12.10 Benchmarking Performance
The least carried out activity by managers was comparing (benchmarking) the performance of their school/unit with similar organisations. 20% ‘never’ did this, although 87% felt it was ‘very important/important’. This may be caused by the lack of collecting and analysing relevant data identified in section 7.12.8, but also by some of the difficulties identified by Smith, McKnight and Robin (2000) who argue that in order to compare universities on a like-for-like basis, important differences in circumstances need to be taken into account, if the indicators are to be seen as a valid performance measure.

7.13 TOP TEN PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT INTERVENTIONS
Middle managers were presented with a list of 24 performance management practices which were compiled from the CIPD (2005) and other performance management practices discussed throughout the literature review. Middle manager were asked to select what they considered to be the most effective Top Ten interventions for improving performance:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intervention</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff Appraisal</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Review</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment and Selection</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Induction</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probation</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career development/Succession planning</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Evaluation</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMART Objectives/Targets</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One to One meetings</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Meetings/Briefings</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Indicators</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance audits/Benchmarking</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching/On the job training</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short training courses</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualification based study</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance framework models e.g. - European Foundation Quality Management, Total Quality Management, Investors in People, Quality Assurance Agency, International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO), Balanced Scorecard etc.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competencies/Skills frameworks</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good employment benefits e.g. - pension, annual leave, pay, staff discount</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written/verbal recognition (praise)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultative processes</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hierarchical organisational structures</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flatter organisational structures</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good employment practices e.g. - Equal Opportunities, Health and Safety, Discipline, Sickness Absence, Grievance, Flexible working etc.</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 7.6: Twenty four performance improvement interventions and their popularity with UL Middle Managers.**

Overall, the most popular ‘Top Ten’ interventions for improving performance were as follows:
Table 7.7: Top ten interventions

It was surprising to see that staff appraisal was considered to be the second most effective management intervention for improving performance when HEIs have been struggling for over 20 years to implement the same (Beesley et al., 2004). Further investigation was undertaken to explore whether this was the view of both academic and support managers equally.

The table below shows that the selection of interventions by both academic and support managers vary and their proportional percentages are indicated alongside their choice to illustrate the difference:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RATING</th>
<th>% VOTE</th>
<th>INTERVENTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>Written/verbal recognition (praise)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>Staff Appraisal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>One to one meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>Team Meetings/Briefings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>Career Development/Succession Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>Good employment practices e.g. - Equal Opportunities, Health and Safety, Discipline, Sickness Absence, Grievance, Flexible working etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>Coaching/On the job training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>SMART Objectives/Targets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>Recruitment and Selection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>Induction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall out</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>Mentoring</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The top ten interventions analysed by academic and support managers are shown in the table below:

**Figure 7.5: Comparison of choice of interventions by academic and support managers**
Intervention | Support Manager Rating | Academic Manager Rating | Intervention
---|---|---|---
Staff appraisal (96%) | 1 | 1 | Written and verbal praise (93%)
Written and verbal praise (90%) | 2 | 2 | One-to-one meetings (80%)
One-to-one meetings (82%) | 3 | 2 | Team meetings (80%)
Team meetings (72%) | 4 | 3 | Career development and succession planning (67%)
Coaching and on the job training (72%) | 4 | 4 | Staff appraisal (60%)
Career development and succession planning (69%) | 5 | 4 | Mentoring (60%)
Good employment practices (58%) | 6 | 5 | Peer review (53%)
SMART objectives and targets (58%) | 6 | 5 | SMART objectives and targets (53%)
Recruitment and selection (48%) | 7 | 6 | Consultative processes (47%)
Induction (48%) | 7 | 6 | Flatter organisational structures (47%)

Table 7.8: Comparison of support and academic top ten interventions

Whilst there were some commonalities amongst support and academic staff in terms of their chosen top ten interventions there were also some noticeable differences. Both support and academic managers rated highly written and verbal praise (89% and 93% respectively), followed by one-to-one meetings (80% and 82% respectively). Other commonalities included team meetings, career development and succession planning and staff appraisal - all of which ranked in the top five interventions bracket, closely followed by (and somewhat surprisingly) SMART objectives and targets.
Softer approaches such as mentoring, peer review, consultative processes and flatter organisational structures were identified by academic managers as part of their top ten choice. This perhaps mirrors the more co-operative type of working that has emerged from the responses to other questions in this survey.

In contrast, support managers’ choices point to a much more systems and process focused way of thinking when they identify good employment practices such as equal opportunities, health and safety, discipline etc; as part of their top ten choices.

Coaching and on-the-job training, although not mentioned by academic managers, could possibly be equated to peer review and mentoring which was rated by academics in their top ten interventions.

Jointly, middle managers voted the least effective interventions for improving performance as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% VOTE</th>
<th>INTERVENTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2%</td>
<td>Performance framework models e.g. - European Foundation Quality Management, Total Quality Management, Investors in People, Quality Assurance Agency, International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO), Balanced Scorecard etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Hierarchical organisational structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16%</td>
<td>Competencies/skills frameworks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16%</td>
<td>Performance audits/Benchmarking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18%</td>
<td>Qualification based study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Performance Indicators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Probation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.9: Least favoured interventions by middle managers
Performance framework models e.g. - European Foundation Quality Management, Total Quality Management, Investors in People, Quality Assurance Agency, International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO), Balanced Scorecard etc. were only rated by one manager (academic) out of the 44 respondents. This is somewhat surprising since UL has held the Charter Mark since 1995, has been recognised as an Investor in People since 2005, uses an adaptation of the BSC to track organisational and school/unit performance and the institution is regularly reviewed as part of the QAA arrangements. Kendell-Rice and Taylor (2003, p.10), assert that “institutions who are using continuous-improvement strategies, by whatever label, are finding them to be proven methodologies for increasing effectiveness and building institutional agility”. Perhaps middle managers find it difficult to make the connections between these models and performance/service improvements, or perhaps they simply see them as cumbersome add-ons.

There were no academic votes for hierarchical organisational structures or competencies/skills frameworks, only one for performance indicators and two for performance auditing and benchmarking.

7.14 IMPROVING PERFORMANCE AT UL

Middle managers were invited to put forward any suggestions or comments which they felt might improve the performance of their school/unit or UL. This question was not compulsory, but was asked as a means of engaging middle managers in the performance management debate and importantly as a method
of capturing their suggestions for consideration as part of the overall findings and recommendations from this research.

34 out of 44 middle managers (14 academic and 20 support) took the time to put forward suggestions and comments in relation to improving the performance of their school/unit or UL. Four main themes emerged:

- Leadership and Direction
- Academic versus Support (the “them and us”)
- Staff Development and Communication
- Systems and Practice

The responses from the middle managers have been grouped according to the themes and are detailed in Figures 7.6, 7.7, 7.8 and 7.9. A brief synopsis of each is provided.

**7.14.1 Leadership and Direction**

Staff believed that we should be trying to create a culture and an environment where staff and students could feel a pride in working and studying at UL. They felt that staff would be better able to support UL’s vision and mission if they were included in a consultation process which determined UL’s general direction. There was also a feeling that UL did not appear to be in command of its own destiny and that whilst there was a lot of talking going on, critical decisions were not being made (or taking too long to be made) and competitors were stealing the market. Cohesive and cross-boarder aims with about three major targets for each year were suggested as a way in which all staff would be encouraged to work together for the good of UL, underpinned by more effective and less bureaucratic business practices.
The key issue is to take some responsible strategic decisions about merging universities to ensure appropriate funding of course development and marketing plus new building provision particularly at Howard Gardens. (but it's too late - we've missed the boat). Without this we are simply chasing our own tails and simply managing our decline. We are simply deluding ourselves if we do not recognise this truth. There will be little chance for improvement although at programme level we are attempting improvement against impossible odds all the time. Delegating budgets in times of decent resources would have been intelligent. Instead delegation comes at the point where everything is pared to the bone. The buck is passed down the line, and now instead of concentrating on teaching, we spend most energy thinking of how not to spend money. If you want a classic we are being asked to undertake maximum recruitment efforts at the point where programmes are to be charged for all postage and the allocation of postage has been slashed dramatically. QED (AMM3)

Our unit, in common I think with all, could improve the performance of UL were we afforded more by way of clear direction and leadership. The institution doesn’t appear to be in command of its own destiny and this leaves scope for malcontentment to spread, personal agendas to take hold and the organisation to atrophy (SMM1)

Cohesive and consistent cross border aims that cross over HR/Finance/Marketing/School/Estates needs - a holistic strategic plan as a UL unit that is based on 3 core aims for one financial year e.g. implementation of Trent, achievement of RDAPs/RAE, implementation of business continuity. All units/schools etc work to achieving these aims and when they are met another set are produced for the following year - plain and simple language not reams and reams of paper. Clear, short and directional vision, bullet points not paragraphs. There is a) too much paper traffic b) too much email traffic and this “guff” gets in the way of doing the real job, a process of attrition must be undertaken to stem the tide of unnecessary paperwork/email to refocus the attention onto the core business activity of academia. There are too many territories and not enough cross border association/implementation and too many comments that it's "X's problem" when all issues are everyone’s problem we have a lack of identity with UL as a whole and more of an individual identity within a unit/school = this is not good business practise (SMF29)

Figure 7.6: improving performance - leadership and direction
7.14.2 Academic versus Support (the “Them and Us”)

There was a plea from both academic and support staff to improve the working relationship between both groups. Managers recognised that the two staff groups were divided and that there was a lack of understanding between the two groups in terms of roles, responsibilities, supporting and compliance requirements. Professional training in people management skills for both academic and support managers was also highlighted as being critical for those who had progressed up the ranks.
Chapter Seven: UL Middle Managers and Performance Management
Analysis of Survey Questionnaire

Ratio of Academic staff to Support staff within the school is not right (weighted too heavily towards support staff). Too many academic staff not nearly pulling their weight. Support staff are treated as second-class citizens - lowest paid despite being on occasion more qualified than some of the lecturing staff, poor conditions of work e.g. lack of staff rooms. No member of technical staff allowed on school M&PT etc etc. (SMM5)

Better understanding of the role of academic and administrative staff. I find it amazing that there is hardly any interaction between either group in UL. As an academic I feel that my role in improving teaching, publishing my work, increasing research and consultancy (i.e. improving UL’s performance) is not well supported administratively. However, I appreciate that administrative role is not well appreciated by academic staff. Therefore, greater understanding of EACH role would help performance (AMM4)

One way in which the UL experience could be improved would be for the hierarchy to make a greater effort to integrate academic and support staff across the university. There still exists a great divide and a ‘them and us’ culture which hinders the student and staff experience and impacts on every aspect of performance management (SMF25)

I feel that there is not enough communication between the administrative centres and academic centres. Occasionally decisions made centrally seem to make life difficult for academic staff. For example, HR decided that no one should sit on an interview panel without training, this may appear a laudable objective but what it meant was that on some interview panels programme directors were unable to sit on the panel recruiting a member of staff for their team. Particularly irritating if they had considerable experience of sitting on panels but hadn’t had an opportunity to do the training (AMF9)

I think a proper review of who is managing what and what skills do they possess to be a manager could be beneficial. It appears to me that there is a distinct lack of professional management within UL with lots of the senior managers (understandably) coming up through the academic field and surprisingly to me, considering I see academia as a ‘people’ business, most with a lack of how to manage people (SMM2)

Greater flexibility for part-timers in workforce. Academic apathy needs to be tackled in order to obtain greater media coverage and to ensure potential students coming through clearing have a tutor to talk to/ditto at open days (even if they are on Saturdays!), Greater input from our Business Support Managers to enable us to connect with academics - this is not working so far (SMF18)

Greater understanding of role of academic and administrative staff. My performance (and efficiency) as a Programme Director is undermined by lack of administrative support generally and some poor central admin systems such as Academic Registry (AMM6)

To create a culture that supports the UL values as being inclusive. Currently support and academic staff appear divided (as indeed this questionnaire shows by asking whether academic or support) - this could be by providing staff rooms, or even an annual Christmas Party (CIA maybe?) for all staff? (SMF19)

Also, need to improve training of academic "managers"; but this statement is based on the stereotype of such individuals not willing to see performance management as a part of their role (SMM4)

Figure 7.7: improving performance – academic versus support
7.14.3 Staff Development and Communication

The benefits of mentoring were highlighted, as was the importance of ensuring that part-time staff had the same training and research opportunities. On going active management training was called for, alongside more specialist management training for other roles such as programme director. Job shadowing was raised by managers as an appropriate way of getting staff to appreciate how “the other half live” (AMF14) and importantly to understand and appreciate the value of different roles within UL and improve communication across schools and units. Communal meeting spaces were also identified as being critical to opening up more productive communication channels.
In previous jobs, I have found mentoring schemes to be really beneficial (mentors from a different unit should be appointed) (SMF16)

More inclusivity of Part time staff in terms of training opportunities, research groups etc (AMF15)

Support needed from the centre hierarchy for all of the services that UL provides. Often feel like we are not needed or wanted in the organisation - it is then difficult to motivate staff when they are not appreciated by the top (SMF24)

The current planning mechanisms are based around each School and Unit submitting individual plans. It would be good to have cross Unit/School discussions when composing the plans and where appropriate to have joint actions/objectives. The mechanisms for gathering student feedback need to be refined in order that services can be more user focused (SMM8)

Management induction procedure not in place at time of employment - first time Programme Director.

On-going, active management training.

Better circulation of support services personnel - better understanding of whom one should contact, and what people do (AMF5)

I personally think that managers at the same levels in UL should meet periodically to share ideas and experiences on matter such as appraisals/personnel issues etc. Most of the time decisions that effect you as a manager are made at higher level. Unless, you are fed this information or you actively seek it you only find out by mistake. I agree that it is hard to keep everyone informed and luckily there is administration e-mails and the staff website which helps (SMM9)

Space and facilities for all staff to meet, discuss, etc (SMM10)

Inter unit/school job shadowing would be a useful annual exercise to allow staff to see how the other half live (AMF14)

Job shadowing days so that staff get an understanding of different roles within the organisation to understand their importance (SMF14)

Given the specific difficulty of line management for me (i.e. in relation to staff participation in enterprise activities) I would be interested to learn how other schools are tackling this issue for I think there are no obvious solutions to this as staff in the School contribute to many different programmes and projects and so have differing priorities (AMF13)

Better communication systems

Improved promotion/reward opportunities

More collegiate atmosphere (between schools and support units) (AMM5)

Being responsive to the professional judgements/views of academic staff. To ensure staff are motivated and feel supported. To develop more inclusive practices and to move away from hierarchical structure so that all staff feel involved and aware of what is happening in the institution/school. To give staff more ownership of processes (linked to respecting professional judgements) eg through UL committees. NB I have been in post as a manager since 1st August. I have been a member of staff at UL for 15 years (AMF11)

Figure 7.8 - improving performance – staff development and communication
7.14.4 Systems and Practice

Managers suggested that UL needs clear structures to reward those staff who are performing well (including for example, letters of thanks from the VC) and mechanisms to discipline poorly performing staff with clearly defined processes that are not long, drawn out, messy and cumbersome for all to use. It is currently believed that there are no incentives to do extra work in research and enterprise, for example, as you get no recognition for doing it. Some managers would like to see the staff replacement process speeded up (not three months from resignation to replacement) and the re-deployment of staff where they have stopped developing or are de-motivated. An academic manager would like to see other mechanisms in place for things like annual programme review to ensure that it is comprehensive rather than anecdotal and perhaps sometimes inaccurate, whilst another would like to ensure that audited systems and processes do not take the place of relationships of trust and ownership.
UL needs clear structures to reward staff who are performing well and mechanisms to discipline poorly performing staff. There is no incentive to do extra work in things like research & enterprise as you get no recognition for it (AMF12)

In cases of poor performance we need robust systems where the manager is left in no doubt as to proceeding with the support of the org (SMF23)

Funding is also a very major problem, with very little money indeed available for staff development within the team's budget (SMF26)

It is a source of frustration that this unit is treated as a small business, when it comes to some things, but not others. This means that when it comes to sick/maternity pay, I am not treated as a small business, therefore cannot claim back the payments plus the 4% compensation, which has a huge impact on my budget. By the very nature of this profession, there will always be a mainly young staff, which means that maternity leave is a constant source of worry (SMF28)

I do not believe that audited systems can take the place of relationships of trust and ownership. I also believe that the imposition of such systems undermines trust and ownership, particularly if used to measure and report. Nor can commitment, generosity, effort or integrity be measured. These are the attitudes which create a great working environment. As a CD I am not prepared to undertake a general auditing role in relation to my colleagues. I am prepared to follow up issues of poor performance however, since they affect the entire team. To this end, a staged system would be helpful so that it was clear when and how responsibility for a specific problem should be passed on to School managers. My experience of the current system has been that it is very long-drawn-out, (up to 3 years in one case) cumbersome and messy for all concerned. NB this questionnaire is not particularly appropriate for CDs and does not adequately express my views (AMF15)

The communications action plan developed by Facilities is a good example of good performance management. (SMM4)

Also to introduce a formal recognition award, whereby staff are ‘rewarded’ with a letter of thanks from the VC. The existing VC Awards are good, but are limited to a few, a letter wouldn't cost much, but would go a long way in terms of morale. Heads of Schools and Dept Heads could nominate staff maybe? (SMF19)

To speed up the Staff replacement process. Typically a vacancy is 3 months from resignation to replacement and this impacts on the remaining team with unreasonable work loads (SMF19)

I believe that UL has a large number of high quality qualified members of staff who have huge untapped potential. I would like a strong leadership and management for the top of good and bad performance. I would like regular rewards to be available for managers to direct to good performers, to recognise the efforts made, and I would like HR to be able to support a robust system for tackling poor performance. I hope that the HERA process can recognise role development, but also that the process can adapt to individuals who do not fulfil the role and make adjustments down if required. I would like HR to be able to support the redeployment of individuals both for individual personal development, and where an individual has stopped developing and is de-motivated in their current role (SMF20)

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A mechanism other than the APR that will give a more understanding and knowledge of a programmes’ teaching content, ethos, best practice. To have a more comprehensive understanding of programme in order that any decision at management and senior management concerning the future of a programme is firmly based on accurate and comprehensive knowledge. Not all information concerning a programme is directly drawn from the course team and is sometimes anecdotal and inaccurate (AMF15)

UL needs clear structures to reward staff who are performing well and mechanisms to discipline poorly performing staff. There is no incentive to do extra work in things like research & enterprise as you get no recognition for it (AMF12)

UL is still trying to come together as a whole organisation. In parts there is some complacency as compared with other organisations. It is somewhat insular as an institution and can therefore lack powers of insight - there needs to be more 'getting out there'. Policies are in place for many things but sometimes they seem not to affect the day to day work of individuals. For HR strategy I would suggest less focus on the letter of the policy and more focus on whether the spirit of it is understood and being carried out on the ground (SMF21)

I do not believe that audited systems can take the place of relationships of trust and ownership. I also believe that the imposition of such systems undermines trust and ownership, particularly if used to measure and report. Nor can commitment, generosity, effort or integrity be measured. These are the attitudes which create a great working environment. As a CD I am not prepared to undertake a general auditing role in relation to my colleagues. I am prepared to follow up issues of poor performance however, since they affect the entire team. To this end, a staged system would be helpful so that it was clear when and how responsibility for a specific problem should be passed on to School managers. My experience of the current system has been that it is very long-drawn-out, (up to 3 years in one case) cumbersome and messy for all concerned. NB this questionnaire is not particularly appropriate for CDs and does not adequately express my views (AMF15)

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I believe that UL has a large number of high quality qualified members of staff who have huge untapped potential. I would like a strong leadership and management for the top of good and bad performance. I would like regular rewards to be available for managers to direct to good performers, to recognise the efforts made, and I would like HR to be able to support a robust system for tackling poor performance. I hope that the HERA process can recognise role development, but also that the process can adapt to individuals who do not fulfil the role and make adjustments down if required. I would like HR to be able to support the redeployment of individuals both for individual personal development, and where an individual has stopped developing and is de-motivated in their current role (SMF20)
7.15 OVERALL CONCLUSIONS IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.15.1 Understanding Performance Management

UL’s middle managers were able to demonstrate some understanding of the term performance management at either organisational, school/unit or individual level, but there was little or no recognition of performance management as a holistic, complex and multidisciplinary phenomena described by Armstrong and Baron (2000). There was no mention by middle managers, of HR policy and practice or staff development as part of this process. 73% of the 44 middle managers felt that UL takes a general approach to performance management with policies covering key areas such as employee development, appraisal and job evaluation, but with no overall performance management strategy. Of these managers, 83% were support managers compared to 54% of academic managers.

Without a common understanding of the holistic, complex and multi-disciplinary nature of performance management, there is a danger that different standards are being applied by managers across the organisation, sending out mixed messages to the staff below.

Recommendations:

The adoption of a performance management model would provide a better understanding of the complex and multi-disciplinary nature of performance management as well as a more structured framework for managing performance holistically.
A briefing session would also be required (for each management group) on the performance management model outlining their roles and responsibilities within that context and emphasising the contribution of people development to continuous improvement.

7.15.2 Culture

It is evident that there are both positive and negative cultures within schools and units, as well as cultures within cultures.

Culture is an important element of successful performance management and the significance of having the right organisational culture is emphasised by CIPD (2008), Purcell (2003), HM Treasury (2001), Armstrong and Ward (2005), The Audit Commission (2002) and the Cabinet Office (2004), who purport that the clarity of purpose and role of culture within an organisation will affect the extent to which performance management resonates and is congruent with the broader culture in which it is being applied. Given the size of UL, it is probably unreasonable to expect to find an ideal culture across the whole of UL. However, where there are pockets of negative culture, this can have a demotivating effect on staff performance and a debilitating effect on performance in general.

Recommendations:

There is a need to explore further, staff attitudes and perceptions as part of the performance management agenda in order to establish and address pockets of negative culture;
Training on the concept of performance management and change management should be available to all managers and staff across the university so that a shift in culture can be enabled and where performance management becomes a standard rather than an exception.

7.15.3 Communicating Performance Requirements

The majority of middle managers used a variety of methods to communicate their expectations, for example, staff or team meetings, one-to-one meetings, e-mail, away days or by setting a personal example. However, less than 50% of middle managers mentioned the SRDS as a means of determining and communicating performance expectations, only 2 of the 44 middle managers mentioned induction as a means of determining and communicating performance expectations and 1 manager mentioned probation.

For academic middle managers there were also some more formal mechanisms of communication in place such as course or exam committees, workload and timetabling meetings and module content planning. Some managers portrayed a more communal way of working, although others found it difficult (as programme directors) to manage performance since they did not have the delegated authority to do so.

Several managers who did not manage staff directly, but were responsible for the achievement of results/outcomes through the efforts of others, utilised coaxing, coaching and influencing skills to communicate their performance requirements.
Induction, probation and staff appraisal/review are all key performance management tools and whilst middle managers were able to give many examples of methods they use to communicate expectations, there could be lost opportunities to manage and improve performance with less than 50% of managers talking about staff appraisal/review and only one or two talking about the use of induction and probation as a means of communicating performance expectations.

**Recommendations:**

It is recommended that HR work on a bespoke basis with the Heads of Schools and Units to agree and put in place local standards for induction, probation and staff review within schools and units and that these arrangements are understood by middle managers.

That arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of induction, probation and staff review as a means of communicating performance expectations are agreed and implemented through the Heads of School and Heads of Unit and that any issues of non-compliance by middle managers are identified by SMG and appropriate action taken.

**7.15.4 Measuring and Reporting on UL Staff Performance**

The findings revealed that some common forms of measuring and reporting on performance were being used by 23 support managers and 11 academic managers, including the use of one-to-one meetings, staff meetings, questionnaires and focus groups to elicit feedback from both internal and
external customers, mid year reviews, spend against budget, internal and external audits and regular managers meetings. 13 support and five academic managers used the SRDS as a tool for measuring and reporting on performance, although there were no managers who made reference to UL’s use of the Balanced Scorecard (BSC).

Although the Audit Commission (2000 stress the importance of translating strategy into practice through the development of SMART objectives which afford staff a greater degree of ownership, there were no UL managers who talked about the use of SMART objectives and yet the setting of SMART objectives is a key component of UL’s SRDS.

The absence of a consistent set of performance measures and appropriate SMART objectives have implications for staff further down the organisation who may find it difficult to understand the connection between what the organisation is trying to achieve and their contribution towards that. If there are limited or ill-defined performance measures in place, then it is unlikely that information relating to these will be collected. This can lead to subjective assessments of performance based on hearsay rather than hard factual evidence.

**Recommendations:**

The organisation would benefit from further promulgating the use of the (corporate) BSC down through the management levels within UL, so that managers and staff can make a better connection between top level indicators and school/unit indicators.
It is expected (as part of the SRDS) that all staff should have a review as well as a set of SMART work and development objectives (linked to UL’s strategies and plans). Middle managers, many of whom have responsibilities as reviewers, are advised to take action to ensure that all reviews take place within their area of responsibility and that all members of staff have SMART objectives to work to.

7.15.5 Rewarding UL Staff for Good Performance

UL academic and support managers appear to be adept at praising and thanking staff in the workplace using a number of conventional and sometimes more innovative ways. The CIPD (2004) highlight the importance of indirect rewards as part of a total reward approach. However, the findings revealed that the majority of middle managers seemed unaware of some of the wider issues concerning reward as an integrated approach to HRM, for example, there was no mention of safe and amiable working environments, job security, flexible working, pay (including additional supplements) or any other organisational benefits that UL provides. In August 2006, the majority of UL staff received significant pay increases and annual leave entitlements as part of the NFA.

The implications of not being able to recognise and then sell the full package of reward benefits mean that there are lost opportunities for engaging, rewarding and making staff feel valued. In the long-term this can impact upon the retention of staff.
Recommendations:
That UL consider developing a reward strategy and publicise current rewards more widely to staff so that they are viewed as benefits, for example the contributory pension scheme, generous annual leave, occupational health etc.

7.15.6 Managing Poor Performance of UL Staff
There was a distinct sense that middle managers were either not confident in their skills to manage poor performance (although over two thirds of them reported that they were), or that they were not sufficiently aware of their role and responsibilities. Some academic managers made reference to referring the problem up the line to the Head of School or Department and a support manager made reference to training up the managers below to deal with issues of poor performance.

There was no mention of the any of the types of underperformance identified by Suff (2006) such as poor standard of work, timekeeping or attitude. Scant reference was made to the use of any of UL’s performance management tools such as staff appraisal/review, induction, probation, training and development or capability, and sickness absence as a performance issue was not mentioned at all. Only two out of the 44 middle managers stated that they would involve HR. These are all fairly critical omissions and the implications are that if middle managers are either not comfortable with dealing with issues of poor performance or do not have robust systems in place to assist them in this process, then it is unlikely that issues of poor performance will be addressed.
This signals to other staff that no action will be taken in response to poor performance and therefore it must be acceptable to behave in that manner.

**Recommendations:**

There is a need to review UL’s performance management processes e.g. the capability procedure to ensure that they are fit for purpose and owned by the middle managers.

There needs to be some more formal training in managing performance for example through setting objectives and in understanding and complying with some of the key HR policies and processes such as induction, probation, staff performance review, capability, sickness absence, grievance and discipline. Training also needs to be provided to assist managers with: how to have those awkward performance conversations with staff and how to conduct effective investigations.

### 7.15.7 Confidence in Own Skills for Managing Performance

Although 33 of the 44 middle managers reported that they were confident in their skills for dealing with poor performance, Suff (2006) found that over two thirds of employers do not rate their line managers as being either confident or competent. Closer investigation would be needed to establish if UL’s Senior managers EMG and SMG hold the same view.

If middle managers are not confident in their skills to tackle issues of poor performance (and 8 UL middle managers are not), then it is likely that
occurrences of poor performance will not be addressed. Consequently, poor performance may be perpetuated by default.

**Recommendations:**

It is recommended that the skill levels of middle managers be assessed formally through the staff performance review process in order that any identified needs can be addressed through training and development.

**7.15.8 Tackling Issues of Poor Performance**

Although the majority of middle managers (73% academic and 72% support) consider tackling issues of poor performance to be part of their role, 46% of academic middle managers and 37% of support middle managers dislike doing so despite feeling supported in this process by their line manager/human resources. More support middle managers (62%) always tackle issues of poor performance compared to academic middle managers (20%).

What is evident is that both academic and support managers both dislike having to tackle issues of poor performance (46% and 37% respectively). As with the findings from the previous question, if middle managers are not confident in their skills to tackle issues of poor performance or do not see it as part of their role, then it is likely that poor performance will either not be tackled or it will not be addressed appropriately. The consequence is that poor performance may be perpetuated by default.
Recommendations:

It is recommended that the knowledge and skills levels required by a middle manager at UL be assessed formally through the staff performance review process in order that any gaps can be addressed through appropriate training and development.

7.15.9 Actions Taken in Relation to Performance Management

It was evident from the findings that all UL’s middle managers take action to promote UL’s vision, mission ethos and values through the work they do. In addition, 98% of them ‘always’ or ‘often’ take time to praise good performance at individual/team level. However, if business processes are not reviewed regularly by all managers it is difficult to ensure high levels of efficiency and effectiveness and there are a number of lost opportunities in relation to managing performance, particularly if not all middle managers (only 50%) are working to clear objectives. Similarly it is difficult to envisage how staff are able to perform at optimum levels if middle managers do not set clear objectives for all their staff. Where SMART objectives had been set, then managers were able to monitor individual/team performance against them.

The findings revealed that only 43% of middle managers ‘always’ took remedial action when they identified poor performance even though they all thought it was important to do so. Other areas of performance management that middle managers do not fully engage with include seeking stakeholder views, collecting and analysing data and benchmarking performance.
Overall it can be concluded that whilst there are some areas of good practice – particularly in relation to promoting UL’s vision, mission, ethos and values, there are also many lost opportunities to improve performance through benchmarking, setting, monitoring and reviewing SMART objectives, collecting and analysing appropriate data, seeking stakeholder views and benchmarking where appropriate. The implications of not engaging with one area of practice such as seeking stakeholder views has implications later on for example, if you do not know what your stakeholders require, how do you know what you are doing is right? If you do not collect and analyse data or carry out any benchmarking, how can you know how well you are performing? Performance management therefore, has to be viewed holistically.

**Recommendations:**

Adoption of a performance management model would provide a better understanding of the complex and multi-disciplinary nature of performance management as well as a more structured framework for managing performance holistically.

A briefing session should be required (for each management group) on the performance management model outlining their roles and responsibilities within that context and emphasising the contribution of people development to continuous improvement.

There needs to be some more formal training in managing performance for example through setting objectives and in understanding and complying with
some of the key HR policies and processes such as induction, probation, staff performance review, capability, sickness absence, grievance and discipline. Training also needs to be provided to assist managers with: how to have those awkward performance conversations with staff and how to conduct effective investigations. The ten interventions under Actions taken in relation to performance management should also be included in any training on performance management with the aim of increasing for example, the number of managers that have SMART objectives set for them and the number of staff that subsequently have SMART objectives set for them.

7.15.10 Top Ten Performance Management Interventions

It can be concluded that whilst there were some commonalities amongst support and academic staff in relation to their chosen top ten interventions there were also some noticeable differences. Both support and academic managers rated highly written and verbal praise (89% and 93% respectively), followed by one-to-one meetings (80% and 82% respectively). Other commonalities included team meetings, career development and succession planning and staff appraisal - all of which ranked in the top five interventions bracket, closely followed by (and somewhat surprisingly) SMART objectives and targets.

Softer approaches such as mentoring, peer review, consultative processes and flatter organisational structures were identified by academic managers as part of their top ten choice. This perhaps mirrors the more co-operative type of working that has emerged from the responses to other questions in this survey. In contrast, support managers’ choices point to a much more systems and
process focused way of thinking when they identify good employment practices such as equal opportunities, health and safety, discipline etc; as part of their top ten choices.

Jointly, middle managers voted the least effective interventions for improving performance as performance framework models such as EFQM and liP (2%), hierarchical structures (5%), competencies/skills, benchmarking, qualifications and performance indicators and probation was supported by only 20% of managers.

Overall the findings indicate that a considerable amount of support for many of the various performance management interventions already exists amongst middle managers. Although a different emphasis between the two staff groups can be detected, for example coaching and on-the-job-training rated by support managers versus peer review and mentoring rated by academic managers, there does not appear to be any great resistance to the majority of the interventions. Those that were least supported such as performance framework models or hierarchical structures may be simply too far removed from the day-to-day management activities of middle managers to have any real meaning. It will therefore be important to determine how best to promote the benefits of each intervention.

**Recommendations:**

UL senior managers need to ensure that they take into consideration the different levels of performance management – organisational, school/unit and
individual level when choosing which managers to engage with each of the various performance interventions, taking into account their immediate relevance to each staff group and any sensitivity.

7.15.11 Improving Performance at UL

Middle managers were asked to make suggestions or comments as to how performance could be improved at UL. These are detailed in 7.14.1; 7.14.2; 7.14.3 and 7.14.4.

Recommendations:

That further consideration be given to the suggestions by middle managers in relation to improving performance at UL:

- Leadership and Direction

- Academic Versus Support (the “Them and Us”)

- Staff Development and Communication

- Systems and Practice
Chapter Eight

Comparisons and Conclusions

The Construction of a Framework for Managing Performance

April 2009
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CHAPTER EIGHT

8.1 REVISED MODEL

Over the years, much of the literature on performance management has tended to confine the phenomena to the realm of staff appraisal. However, modern thinking has moved away from this somewhat limited view to regarding performance management as holistic, complex and multidisciplinary (Armstrong and Baron, 1998); (The Cranfield School of Management, 2007); (CIPD, 2006).

HR is no longer the sole territory of the HR practitioner, managers also need to be concerned with people management and therefore performance management. It is through their staff that universities are able to respond to the challenges of the changing HE environment, embracing concepts such as student centred learning, employability and widening participation. The effective management of performance at organisational, school/unit and individual level is therefore critical to the success of a HEI.

Chapter Two developed a unified theoretical model of performance management, which aimed to draw together some of the key performance management thinking detailed throughout the literature review. The model (Figure 2.23) comprises ten elements: culture; planning, supporting and reviewing; stakeholder requirements; institutional direction, strategies and plans; performance measures; structures, systems and processes; hrm/hrd; delivering the business; actual results or outcomes; review and evaluation.
This section of chapter eight will compare UL’s performance (described in chapter four) against the unified theoretical model in order to assess how successful (or otherwise) the performance interventions over the last eight years have been and to determine the model’s applicability as a performance management framework. The responses of UL’s EMG, SMG and Middle Managers, will also be assessed within the context of the framework to ascertain if there are any gaps.

8.2 CULTURE

Recognising the important role of culture and values in motivating staff and improving performance, EMG organised a senior management away-event at Lamphey Court in 2005 to further develop work (started in 2004) around developing values and building organisational culture (see chapter 4 section 4.3.10).

In 2004 when these interviews were conducted, UL’s EMG and SMG had mixed views about the culture of the organisation. Whilst EMG1 describes how organisational disjunctures can lead to UL’s schools and units to “…‘blame off on other sections for things having gone wrong….and pointing the finger”; EMG2 makes the point that performance management should not be about “going in there and laying the law down and thrashing people, but being aware of where the weak areas are and determining how to bring them forward” (EMG2).
The ‘Anequotes’ (detailed in Volume Two, Section Four) capture a snapshot of some of the SMG views on UL culture:

*In-fighting, one-up-man-ship and selfish plotting – we are all on the SAME SIDE!*

*‘We are a muddle in the middle’*

*In team UL we all wear the same colours – we are just all rowing in different directions!*

In 2006 (shortly after the restructuring), middle managers described the culture in both positive and negative terms. Positively, some felt that:

> We support each other fully, share best practice and rotate admin, organisational and teaching roles. Although I have CD responsibility, most decisions are democratically made, and workload/performance issues dealt with co-operatively. On the rare occasions where problems are intractable, the problem is reported to SMPT (AMF10).

> The culture in our school is proactive and challenging. We are beginning to build a team with one central visionary aim but there is some way to go (SMF29).

Whilst on the negative side:

> It feels like a blame culture and a bean counter culture that shows little understanding of the realities of our educational cultures and what is valued by students and our stakeholders. The mood culture comes from the top (AMM3).

> There is no cohesive culture within the school, except dissidence. There is a general view amongst the academic staff that they are unmanageable and they seem to work hard to make this is a self-fulfilling prophecy (SMF27).
Chapter Seven, Section 7.5 details other views and full transcripts can be found in Volume Two sections one to three.

The importance of having the right organisational culture is emphasised by CIPD (2008), Purcell (2003), HM Treasury (2001), Armstrong and Ward (2005), The Audit Commission (2002) and the Cabinet Office (2004), who purport that the clarity of purpose and role of culture within an organisation will affect the extent to which performance management resonates and is congruent with the broader culture in which it is being applied. Culture forms the nucleus of the unified theoretical model. The responses from EMG, SMG and middle managers demonstrate that this is an area that would benefit from continued development.

**Recommendations:**

That where negativity and/or blame have been identified, action is taken to ameliorate the situation.

That UL consider the widespread use of the HSE Management Standards as a means of consistently promoting a positive culture particularly through the elements of ‘support’, ‘relationships’ and the communication of organisational ‘change’.

The continued promulgation of UL’s values including the seven principles of public life (Nolan, 1997) should assist in setting out UL’s expectations of staff
behaviour, a message which can be re-enforced through the communication strategy and the HR people management processes.

8.3 PLANNING, SUPPORTING AND REVIEWING PERFORMANCE

The liP standard has been central to UL’s journey of continuous improvement providing a Plan, Do and Review framework around which schools and units have been able to structure their business. The establishment of a dedicated SDU, a more structured strategic planning process and the introduction/refinement of HRM/HRD processes, such as induction, probation and staff review and development have also contributed to UL’s improved performance.

Planning supporting and reviewing performance is complicated by the fact that performance needs to be viewed at three distinct levels – the performance of the organisation, the performance of the school/unit and the performance of the individual within that context. Additionally, managers need to operate vertically up and down these levels - which for the most are interdependent – “I guess in a simplistic way, performance management for me, is about all members of staff at whatever level throughout UL, contributing to the overall strategic objectives” (EMG4).

Thus, performance can be **planned** at organisational, school/unit and individual level, **supported** at organisational, school/unit and individual level and **reviewed** at organisational, school/unit and individual level.
The responses from EMG, SMG and middle managers reveal that only a minority of managers have a holistic view of performance and for the most, there is a tendency to get stuck within a particular level. 73% of middle managers felt that UL takes a general approach to performance management with policies covering key areas such as employee development, appraisal, and job evaluation but with no overall performance management strategy.

The cyclical nature of performance management is highlighted by Torrington et al. (2002) and iiP UK (2008). Torrington et al. (2002) recommend that employee performance can be managed informally as part of every day management activities. All managers need to have a sound grasp of the complexities of performance management. These Planning, Supporting and Reviewing steps form a central part of the unified model around which the other inter-related elements emanate (Figure 2.23).

**Recommendations:**
That in addition to maintaining the Investors in People standard, UL consider the implementation of a performance management framework to assist managers in adopting a more holistic approach to managing performance at all levels and across UL.

**8.4 STAKEHOLDER REQUIREMENTS – WHAT SHOULD WE BE DOING?**
At Lamphey Court in 2005, UL managers identified a range of stakeholders including: Government, staff, students, parents, financial bodies, collaborators and employers. Further work (in the form of a full stakeholder analysis) has
been recently undertaken and a Stakeholder Forum established. UL was first awarded the Charter Mark/CSE in 1995 and was last successfully reviewed in 2007.

The importance of stakeholders was recognised by EMG who spoke of the Board of Governors, QAA, Estyn, HEFCW, staff and students. This stakeholder focus was echoed by a member of SMG who stated “… I mean, we could be the most efficient department in the entire university but if what we are doing is not relevant or beneficial to our customers then it’s pointless, so to me performance is delivering what the customers’ want” (SMGHOUM2). But whilst the sentiment was there, the reality was summed up by one HOU who said, “what we are not good at, is asking the client what they want!” (SMGHOUM1).

Much of the traditional work around customer excellence at UL has been centred on the student, possibly to the detriment of other stakeholders and particularly that of the internal customer. There was a plea from middle managers to improve the working relationship between academic and support staff, citing a lack of understanding between the different roles, responsibilities, supporting and compliance requirements.

Beer et al. (1984) and the Audit Commission (2002) stress the importance of identifying the multiplicity of stakeholders and establishing their requirements at the outset.
**Recommendations:**

In addition to maintaining the Charter Mark/CSE award and utilising the NSS results to inform performance improvements, UL may wish to consider utilising the outcomes of UL’s stakeholder analysis and forum to inform ‘Stakeholder requirements’.

In order to further explore opinion and climate, UL may wish to consider the introduction of select surveys/focus groups amongst different staff clusters.

**8.5 INSTITUTIONAL DIRECTION, STRATEGIES AND PLANS – HOW SHOULD WE DO THIS?**

Required by the Funding Council, the CSP and associated learning, teaching and research strategies have been in existence since the university became known as UL in 1996. The development of UL’s plans since this time has been significant. A major revision of the CSP and creation of a HR strategy in 2003, paved the way for the introduction of KPIs and the use of the (corporate) BSC, signalling a desire for UL to become more performance orientated. The Board of Governors gave further strength to the vision of UL through their statement of strategic direction and intent in 2005.

Members of EMG tried to give their managers “....a strong sense of strategic direction and priorities i.e. a framework within which they can perform…” (EMG1). As EMG4 said “……so we have the strategic plan as it were, the vision, the objectives and we’ll break those down into a series of targets and look at how those can be delivered.”
55% of the HOUs spoke about having business plans in place with clear objectives, meeting day-to-day operational targets and having clear line management structures with formal cascading processes. Some HOSs described how they aligned their school plans with UL’s strategic objectives “creating a model vision with aims. This sets your template for performance” (SMGHOSM12) whilst others described how, “for each activity within the school, we set targets in our operational plan and we monitor these targets in our SMPT meetings on a fortnightly basis” (SMGHOSM15).

91% of UL middle managers felt that it was ‘important/very important’ to have clear objectives and targets to work to each year, but in reality only 50% of them did. Significantly, only 25% of middle managers ‘always’ set their own teams/individuals SMART objectives to work to.

Armstrong and Ward (2005) purport that the clarity of purpose, direction, priorities and standards within the organisation (or lack of) will affect the extent to which performance resonates. Armstrong and Baron (1998) contend that performance management is multi-layered in that it is a strategic issue concerned with the organisation’s longer-term goals and direction, concerned with the integration of individual and team objectives with organisational strategies and plans and concerned with the capabilities of individuals and teams. HM Treasury (2001), stress the importance of translating strategy into practice through the development of SMART objectives which afford staff a greater degree of ownership. It is difficult to envisage how some managers and hence staff, will understand the implications of UL’s strategies and plans for
their role and their performance within that, when the alignment of plans and setting of SMART objectives is haphazard. The levels of managers and staff who do not have clear objectives to work to reflects a level of lost opportunity to manage/improve performance.

**Recommendations:**

UL would benefit from ensuring that the direction, priorities and standards set at EMG and SMG level are cascaded to all middle managers, FLMs and staff below. Since it is expected (as part of the staff performance review) that all staff should have a set of SMART work and development objectives (linked to UL’s strategies and plans), this would appear to be more of a compliance issue. UL is therefore advised to take action to tackle corporate non-compliance.

**8.6 PERFORMANCE MEASURES – INDICATORS, TARGETS, OBJECTIVES, INPUTS AND OUTCOMES – HOW WILL WE KNOW?**

The first sets of PIs for HE were published by the PISG in 1999. Since 2004 UL has been reporting to HESA on an annual basis against a range of PIs. UL has now adopted the CUC (2006) Top-Ten high-level indicators and uses the (corporate) BSC as a means of translating and cascading the objectives. As an outcome of the staff review scheme, all staff should be in possession of a set of SMART work and development objectives.

EMG 2 was not confident that systems for measuring and managing performance were fully developed. This was echoed by a HOS who said, “Well we don’t really measure performance in that sense. I don’t think HR has
previously played a really strong part and I think we have only recently put better HR practices and systems in place” (SMGHOSF17).

Two HOSs and two HOUs used plans, objectives and targets to measure and manage performance but for the remainder of SMG a number of operational measures were used. For academic managers these included: observation of teaching; student written feedback; annual course reports; module evaluation; quality of degree results; end of year showcase. For support managers performance measures included: numbers of KTPs; financial results; funded contracts; parental satisfaction sheets.

13 support middle managers (44%) and five academic middle managers (33.3%) also stated that they used the staff performance review scheme as a tool for measuring and reporting on performance, although no middle managers made reference to the use of SMART objectives which are a key component of UL’s staff review scheme.

Benchmarking was used to some extent by both EMG and SMG. EMG4 demonstrated the benefits of benchmarking when used to inform strategy:

.... So yes, we are constantly looking at benchmarking and we did the same with the RAE and that kind of influenced the strategic thinking at the last RAE, where we went from entering eight or nine units for assessment with 40% of staff, to four units for assessment with 25% of staff, and that has sort of moved us up 20 places in the league table in RAE terms and in monetary terms it’s moved us from just under half a million to £1.2 million – so that’s a case of benchmarking which has a real sort of impact (EMG4).
However, both management groups recognised that benchmarking was a somewhat under-developed activity, although there appeared to be more benchmarking activity taking place within the units than the schools, despite both groups identifying issues around comparing like for like.

Middle managers voted performance audit/benchmarking as one of the least effective interventions for improving performance. This may have been because of the difficulty of finding suitable and comparable measures.

The HM Treasury (2001, p.23) recommend that monitoring – including comparing performance over time or with other organisations – should be a key component of any successful performance measurement system. In keeping with the Cranfield School of Management (2007), several members of the top team and SMG recognised the important link between strategy and performance objectives, but only one HOU made reference to the formulation of SMART objectives as a means of translating strategy into practice (HM Treasury, 2001). Action to improve performance, based on the insight provided by performance measures, was not mentioned by EMG, SMG or the middle managers and no reference to the (corporate) BSC was made. However, this should not have been a surprise since EMG2 alluded to the underdeveloped nature of performance measurement frameworks in HE – a view shared by the CUC (2006).
**Recommendations:**

UL could benefit from promulgating the use of the (corporate) BSC down through the management levels within UL, so that managers and staff can make a better connection between top level indicators and school/unit indicators. Again, it is expected (as part of the staff performance review) that all staff should have a set of SMART work and development objectives (linked to UL’s strategies and plans), therefore UL is advised to take action to tackle corporate non-compliance.

8.7 STRUCTURE, SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES – CLEAR MANAGEMENT ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, REGULAR COMMUNICATION, TEAM AND ONE-TO-ONE MEETINGS

The achievement of critical mass at UL has been brought about through two major re-structuring exercises in 1999 and 2006. Firmer management arrangements, emphasising lines of responsibility and accountability have been put into place to support the re-structuring process. Planned investment in new technology has seen the implementation of a new HR/payroll system, capable of producing more meaningful management information. Formal committee structures exist within UL as well as formal HR systems and processes.

Despite the progress that has been made, EMG2 reported that “it’s quite difficult to say ‘You’re not doing this very well’, ‘I asked you for this three weeks ago where is it?’ or ‘Why have you under recruited – I want an action plan’, in the absence of any explicit performance management framework. All management groups found it difficult to manage poor performance and many disliked doing
so. There was also a long history of not dealing with issues, preferring instead to sideline people.

Despite this, there was a general consensus that it was more important to monitor performance regularly, rather than to regard it as a once a year activity. Regular one-to-one and team meetings were cited by all management groups as being essential to the performance management process.

For HOUs, the structures and systems appeared to complement performance management arrangements. For HOSs, the structures and line management arrangements were more problematic:

I really have real difficulties in that I’ve got real responsibilities, but no line management power. So I was expected to do and change and implement and develop and all that but I didn’t have the line management. So I can only ask for the director to do things but I can’t tell them…..Again, the course directors manage a team and they don’t have any line management, so that when they do a timetable for example or they try to produce some changes to the course they can only ask. But I mean implementation is really difficult. I mean in my school we had so many agreed procedures and processes, but implementation was very, very poor because there is no line management or they can’t tell people what to do… (SMGHOSM15).

Whilst middle managers in schools replicated this view, some hoped that the restructuring and new centres in schools would alleviate this problem.

A Director of Enterprise was concerned that they were only able to “…clarify role descriptions, expectations and performance requirements..” where that person had an exclusive enterprise remit and for the majority of staff, enterprise activities were peripheral to the main role thereby limiting the authority the
Director had. Other academic managers made reference to the lack of line management authority programme directors had over course members.

The unitary form of ‘structures, systems and processes’ seems to sit unnaturally in the often pluralistic nature of a university – demonstrated for example, by the 20 year (and on-going) struggle to implement a simple staff appraisal scheme. McCaffery (2004, p.3) contends that although universities have some unique features they are not so atypical that they need to be managed in special ways. “*Indeed our propensity for insularity does us no favours either in how we manage our universities, or in seeking to exercise influence in broader political circles*” . Sir Michael Bichard concurs with this view stating that “…*people do expect some leadership, they don’t really want endlessly to be debating ‘where next?’*” (Chambers, 2005, p.6).

**Recommendations:**

That UL considers further defining line management roles, responsibilities and accountabilities down through all the staffing levels, but particularly in the schools for example with Programme Directors, Year Tutors, etc.

Providing structured training and development in ‘People Management’ for managers/supervisors at all levels, so that they understand their roles, responsibilities and accountabilities.
8.8 HRM/HRD

Subsequent to the creation of a dedicated SDU, the Personnel Department was metamorphosed into an integrated HR function, illustrated in Figure 4.1. The development of a HR strategy and the implementation of the NFA were significant advances and a number of HRM/HRD processes were refined to support the performance management agenda within UL including the development of family-friendly policies and occupational health care with an emphasis on well-being. However, the embedding of HRM/HRD processes is not yet fully developed. A comparison of management practices (EMG, SMG and middle managers) in relation to recruitment and selection, induction, probation, staff review, career development and reward follows:

8.8.1 Recruitment and Selection

The literature contends that the world-class reputation of HEIs depends upon their ability to attract, recruit and retain high-quality staff. Recruitment and selection is therefore a critical activity, not only for HR but increasingly line managers. It is a highly-complex process which requires careful planning and attention to the different stages – job specification, job and person specifications, attracting and managing applications, selecting candidates, making the appointment and joining the organisation (CIPD, 2007). Equalities issues also need to be taken into consideration throughout the process so that selection is based on objective criteria rather than gut feeling or instinct.
Whilst EMG members were concerned to ensure that care and consideration be given to the criteria in the JDs and PSs, they did not mention any of the following components of recruitment and selection:

- The legal framework of employment law, including the requirement for sound job evaluation processes to protect against potential claims of equal pay for work of equal value;
- The potential costs of getting the recruitment process wrong, for example, discrimination claims or appointing someone who is unable to perform satisfactorily;
- The training and development of managers to ensure they are equipped with the right skills and knowledge to undertake recruitment and selection effectively.

It is unlikely that senior managers would not be aware of these issues, rather, that they are not seen as significant. Similarly, there was no evidence that SMG were aware of the overall cost of the recruitment and selection exercise, especially with regard to getting it wrong. The impact of a badly-chosen appointment on a school or unit can be significant both in financial and emotional terms (Thomson, 2002), as can a claim of direct or indirect discrimination (Equal Opportunities Commission, 2007). There was no reference made by SMG to legislation, but examples of gut feelings, filling out the scores after the event and writing job descriptions around a preferred person were given, indicating that although some HOUs and HOSs talk about following HR policy and procedure, the reality might be different:

*Do you want the honest answer? We interview, I select the right person and I mark your interviewing sheets to reflect the person I want. Yeah. I mean I think since I’ve been here I’ve never had any problems* (SMGHOUM2).
And often, what we have done in the past is that we have a person in mind and we’ve sort of head-hunted people for certain jobs, and then we’ve made sure that the job description and the key competencies actually fit that person – I know I shouldn’t be saying this to you! – but we’ve done that and you’re not telling me that that doesn’t happen in industry…… And it’s not so much that they’ve got the skills or the knowledge or understanding, it’s will they fit? Are they the right person for this organisation, this culture, this school? (SMGHOSM10).

Middle managers (40% academic and 48% support) jointly considered recruitment and selection to be the ninth most effective performance intervention for improving performance when rating their preferred top ten interventions out of 24. This could be considered a missed opportunity, as the recruitment and selection of the right calibre staff is a pro-active way of minimising the risk of poor performance.

Whilst there are some examples of good recruitment and selection practices across UL there is a sense that recruitment and selection is viewed as an administrative housekeeping exercise rather than as a complex and strategic tool for recruiting high calibre staff.

**Recommendations:**

Universities operate in an increasingly litigious society and HR and managers have an important role to play in protecting UL from claims of discrimination. It is recommended that UL considers engaging a firm of solicitors to provide some bespoke recruitment and selection training for managers.
In addition, surveying a sample of successful/unsuccessful candidates to monitor the quality and standards of recruitment and selection practices, would ensure that potential/actual issues were identified, allowing appropriate remedial action to be taken.

8.8.2 Induction
The responses from EMG give no indication as to whether induction is recognised as part of the wider performance management agenda. Whilst it is evident that some aspects of induction do take place, there is no reference by EMG to key parts such as:

- The identification of training needs including essential health and safety training; setting out performance expectations and staff reviews;
- Standards and rules, such as: financial regulations; corporate standards of behaviour; use of e-mail; time keeping;
- Terms and conditions of employment, such as: absence reporting; expenses; hours of work; pensions; probationary period;
- Employee relations, for example: trade union membership; consultation; discipline; grievance procedures;
- Personal documentation and checks, such as: CRB checks; personal identification card and number; payment of salary details; e-mail account.

There was evidence from both HOSs and HOUs of some strong induction processes taking place, for example, mini teaching and learning sessions, allocations of mentors, guided tours and demonstrations of systems and processes. At the same time, there was evidence from both HOSs and HOUs
of some weaker methodologies such as “I would tend to just drop in and say is everything OK”, or “If there are no questions then there’s the lavatory and there’s the canteen…” with some HOUs self confessing to having haphazard or weak induction processes in place: “Umm right, that’s probably something we are a little bit weak in. I think we are now looking to have some more formal induction processes – that was something that came out of our iIP review” (SMGHOUM3).

Akin to EMG, there was little or no mention by SMG of the inclusion of important topics such as performance and training, standards and rules, health and safety, and terms and conditions as described by Rankin (2004).

Middle managers (33% academic and 48% support) jointly considered induction to be the tenth most effective performance intervention for improving performance when rating their preferred top ten interventions out of 24.

The literature purports that inefficient and unorganised approaches to induction lead to “at least a week of dead time when employees join an organisation”, thereby costing UK businesses up to £2 billion per annum in lost employee productivity (Online recruitment, 2006, online). The long-term costs of not affording sufficient and appropriate induction programmes are evidenced by the CIPD (2007c) who identify that 19% of leavers do so within the first six months of service. As with recruitment and selection, this is a missed opportunity to pro-actively minimise potential underperformance through giving the induction process greater structure and priority.
**Recommendations:**

That UL considers working individually with managers to put in place best practice induction arrangements, particularly at school/unit level, and considers surveying a sample of new inductees to monitor the quality and standards of UL’s induction practices in order to identify issues of non-compliance and take appropriate remedial action.

**8.8.3 Probation**

ACAS (2008) recommend that when employees commence work, the conditions of any probationary period should be explained, along with the consequences of not reaching the required standard. Contracts of employment are usually subject to meeting certain criteria, of which the probationary period is one. Employees have a responsibility to demonstrate acceptable levels of performance, but employers must make clear their expectations, set reasonable objectives and provide training and development and supervision to assist them in doing this. The probationary period is also a time for employees to appraise the organisation.

When members of the top team were asked about their probation arrangements, they did not make any reference to the link between the contract of employment and probation, training and development or the conditions of any probationary period, including the potential to dismiss:

*I’m aware that that’s loose – very loose. But I think with teaching staff it’s got to be linked to this framework we’re talking about and with mentoring and teaching and learning experience, because we’ve got staff – I mean I was dealing with a personnel case last summer with someone whose been teaching in UL for ten years where the school has to give him work where he can’t do damage*
– that’s frightening. That person’s never been told - or not never been told, never been exposed to a discussion about the evidence – so I think we do need to tighten up on that, we definitely do (EMG2).

Even though some form filling does take place when prompted, there is little evidence that HOSs and HOUs fully understand the implications of the probation period particularly in relation to communicating performance expectations and monitoring progress:

*We did have a problem with sort of one individual who had a few problems with the sickness, but he eventually just left and never came back and after a period of time you...his contract was terminated, but that wasn’t a failure of probation in that sense, but I mean I suppose it could have been, if we had been looking at it a bit more closely...perhaps we need to (SMGHOUM3).*

Middle managers (26% academic and 17% support) jointly considered probation to be one of the least-effective performance interventions for improving performance when rating their preferred top ten interventions out of 24.

Again, as with the recruitment and selection and induction, this is a missed opportunity to pro-actively minimise potential underperformance through giving the probation process greater structure and priority.

**Recommendations:**

That UL considers working individually with managers to put in place best practice probation arrangements, particularly at school/unit level, and considers surveying a sample of probationers (at different stages of the process) to
monitor the quality and standards of UL’s probation practices in order to identify issues of non-compliance and take appropriate remedial action.

8.8.4 Staff Performance Review

Despite over 20 years of trying (Jarrett, 1985; Dearing, 1997; Bett, 1999) staff appraisal is still not fully integrated into HEIs and Beesly et al. (2004, p.12) report that there is “a distinct sense of déjà vu when reading some of the challenges identified”. This continuing struggle was mirrored by the top team when they spoke about UL’s scheme as not being developed enough and hence inadequate in terms of performance management. The necessity of having tighter target setting and clearer objective setting (as recommended by the CIPD, 2005) was picked up by all four members of EMG, with EMG1 stating that “people should have half a dozen clear performance objectives”. Importantly, EMG1 also saw the value in the “bits in between” the review, highlighting the usefulness of having fortnightly sessions with his/her managers, sometimes meeting on a more regular basis (even daily) in order to address any issues in a timely fashion. The top team were keen to improve the staff review scheme by making it more performance orientated and particularly liked the ‘bite’ that external schemes often seemed to have, although EMG3 was of the opinion that the problem at UL was “more about compliance”.

Four out of the eight HOSs and seven out of nine HOUs mentioned the SRDS as a means of measuring and managing individual performance. In keeping with the sector generally, the findings showed that both schools and units seem to struggle to make the scheme work. For HOUs there were issues with getting
engagement from staff in service areas, such as catering and estates, and for HOSs there were continuing operational issues with the scheme because of the unclear management structures and accountabilities alongside staff either avoiding or sabotaging the scheme with apparently no action being taken.

The majority of middle managers (23 support managers and 11 academic managers), spoke of how they communicated their performance requirements/expectations through a variety of mediums such as staff/team meetings, one-to-one meetings, e-mail, regular reviews and discussions, management by setting a personal example and facilitating staff away days. However, less than 50% of middle managers (13 support and 5 academic) mentioned UL’s SRDS as a means of determining and communicating performance expectations. Despite this finding, middle managers (60% academic and 96% support) jointly considered staff review to be the second most effective performance intervention for improving performance when rating their preferred top ten interventions out of 24.

The literature suggests that performance appraisal is “a well-established way of providing milestones, feedback, guidance and monitoring for staff. A further development…is tying this appraisal into a larger and more complex system of performance management” (Weightman, 1999, p.200). CIPD (2008d) support the view that whilst performance appraisal is an important part of performance management, it is only one tool amongst a range of tools that can be used to manage performance. The ‘Rewarding and Developing Staff in Higher Education - good practice in setting HR strategies’ initiative, revealed that aside
from new performance management systems, procedures and training, there was also a need for a more common understanding of the concept of performance management across the sector:

*a cultural shift within HEIs towards an acceptance of performance management.....so that performance review becomes the norm, rather than the exception. This will involve tackling poor performance, but also managing good performance*  
(KPMG, 2005, p. 7).

Evidence shows that less than half of performance reviews are being carried out. This is a lost opportunity for, inter alia, assessing performance against agreed targets and objectives and providing information to the individual on their performance and progress (CIPD, 2005).

**Recommendation(s)**

That UL considers working individually with managers to put in place best practice staff review arrangements, particularly at school/unit level, and considers surveying a sample of reviewees to monitor the quality and standards of UL's staff review practices in order to identify issues of non-compliance and take appropriate remedial action.

**8.8.5 Career Development and Succession Planning**

The LFHE (2006, p.9) stresses the importance of HEIs viewing succession planning as a means of creating a “pipeline” of talent rather than a tap to be turned on and off suggesting that HEIs should have “at least two ready now” candidates for every critical role. HEIs are also advised to adopt a “grow your own” strategy which is not only more cost effective than seeking talent externally, but can also have the added advantage of motivating existing staff.
Although the least-developed area of HRM in Universities was found to be workforce planning (KPMG, 2005), both EMG and SMG were able to demonstrate high levels of activity in this area, albeit no formal systems or processes in place.

EMG4 openly succession planned out of competitive necessity:

   ....so if there is one individual in a key role, there are at least two other individuals in the organisation that understand the key issues, sit in on meetings and kind of own that – and its actually worked, because we've had a key individual loss for two months now and we've not reached a critical position out there because we've put that kind of succession planning in place…

EMG2 nurtured and developed managers as part of the leaning and teaching ethos, EMG3 was more paternalistic and EMG1 encouraged managers to succession plan, but identified difficulties because of the large salary gaps between the HOSs/HOUss and the next person down, referring to a lack of “ladders and bridges” (EMG1).

For SMG, whilst there was a general consensus amongst HOSs and HOUss that succession planning was only appropriate to particular higher level roles, which tended to be more difficult to replace, succession planning appeared to be more critical for the HOSs especially where key staff such as course directors or specialised teaching staff were leaving. HOSs were unhappy that the financial arrangements did not allow for a handover period between critical staff leaving and new staff starting. SMG members tried to up-skill existing staff in preparation for career progression, by encouraging them to take on other responsibilities, or work alongside already skilled staff:
I will always talk to staff about what is the next step in the ladder they need to go to and what are the requirements for that step. And again, that’s about the staff development they need in order to reach that step. That is like a standard part of the agenda in the staff review meeting – we look at what is the next stage and how to get there. ‘I’m a senior lecturer and I require a PL, so what are the next stages for me?’ And we divide the staff development accordingly – according to need (SMGHOSM15).

Qualification-based study was mentioned by some HOUs as a way of retaining staff and also as a means of ensuring that the organisation has the right levels of expertise for the future.

Middle managers (67% academic and 69% support) jointly considered career development and succession planning to be the fifth most effective performance intervention for improving performance when rating their preferred top ten interventions out of 24.

**Recommendations:**
In the interests of ensuring equality issues are taken into account, it is recommended that UL considers making explicit its succession planning ethos and arrangements through the development and implementation of some more formal UL succession planning processes. In addition, UL may wish to consider working individually with managers to put in place best practice succession planning arrangements and monitoring the numbers, quality and standards of succession arrangements across UL.
8.8.6 Rewarding Performance

A talented and motivated workforce is often the secret to organisational success and strong financial performance. Reward strategies, although complicated, can play a significant part in motivating and incentivising staff to perform well, but 67% of organisations currently do not have a formal reward strategy in place (CIPD, 2008). Tulip (2004) suggests that organisations are now turning to a variety of alternative and more tangible methods of reinforcing the message, not only as part of promoting and rewarding the good performance of existing employees, but also as part of their recruitment and retention strategies.

The top team did not make reference to either a reward strategy or the connection between reward and recruitment and retention. They did however identify a number of non-financial benefits that could be used to incentivise staff for example: being accepted; being valued; saying thank you; staff development; sabbaticals. The top team did not mention some of the other benefits that UL offers, such as the contributory pension schemes, generous annual leave and occupational health care. This may be because they are taken somewhat for granted rather than being sold as benefits to staff. EMG were split in their views when the discussions turned to monetary reward. Some thought that the quality of life was more important than the pay, whilst others thought that the most important aspect was the pay. The top team were equally as split over the benefits or otherwise, of performance-related pay, or profit-related pay (PRP). The top team did not mention the psychological contract.
HOSs and HOUs were all in agreement that good performance should be rewarded, albeit there were different opinions when it came to determining what and how. The suggested rewards fall mainly into three broad categories - money; flexible benefits such as sabbaticals or prizes and recognition via praise, thanks and publicity; - all of which were identified in the literature as component parts of a model reward strategy. Of concern to both HOSs and HOUs in terms of performance and reward, was the issue of equity, summed up rather pithily by a HOU “I think, so long as it’s done in a fair way, because what you find is people are happy with equal misery, but once someone gets something better…oh you could rock the boat”! (SMGHOUF9).

Research by Herriot et al. (1997), identified that amongst other things, employees expected the employer to provide: a safe and amiable working environment; job security; induction; staff development; flexible working; fair recruitment, appraisal, promotion and redundancy policies and procedures. In return for providing these, the organisation expects its employees to: work the hours they have been contracted to work; consistently perform their work to high standards; demonstrate loyalty and commitment to the organisation and conduct all their business in a honest and professional manner.

25 managers (18 support and seven academic) spoke about praising individuals or teams for their good work/achievement as well as rewarding them with meals, cakes and chocolate. The majority of middle managers appeared unaware of the concept of reward as an integrated approach to HRM, as there was no mention of safe and amiable working environments, job security, flexible
working, pay or any other organisational benefits that UL provides – (albeit three support managers did make reference to training and development as a means of rewarding staff). In August 2006, the majority of UL staff received significant pay increases and annual leave entitlements as part of the NFA.

**Recommendations:**
That UL considers better communicating the range of benefits that are given to staff so that they are regarded as such.

8.9 ENHANCING THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE THROUGH TEACHING, RESEARCH, ENTERPRISE, SERVICE OR ADMINISTRATION – DELIVERING THE BUSINESS

The key areas of business at UL have been defined through the Top-Ten KPIs CUC (2006) and the 15 key challenges identified by the LFHE, 2005. These are defined in the CSP and reflected in UL’s other associated strategies and plans. The business of the university is conducted through formal management arrangements, but is also steered through the existing committee structures/cycles, which can be a lengthy process.

EMG and SMG take the ‘Enhancing the Student Experience’ very seriously and business activity related to this is discussed on a regular basis. The following Anequotes were captured during the senior management away events that took place in 2004, 2005 and 2006:
If schools don’t have a handle on academic development then we’re in trouble and I have a problem.

We need to work on getting a better quality of outcome for our students so that they are securing ‘graduate employability’ status when they leave UL.

It is difficult to improve our brand without the right portfolio in place: we need to have ‘Employer Approved’ stamped on the front of the portfolio of all schools.

We have strengths in traditional delivery but there is a huge training need in developing flexible learning.

Research, Enterprise and Third Mission is still not very visible in UL, either physically (there are very few places we can take visiting bodies) or in terms of engagement/performance (KTPs 3% tops and palpable engagement in research 10%) we need more engagement and also from people around this table (Management Board).

Student registry should be so efficient that they (students) don’t know registry is there! Then they can concentrate on their learning, get better grades and therefore obtain graduate employability. At the moment under 2% of our students return to graduate study with us.

We have known for several years, even before the student satisfaction survey that students dislike the timing and quality of the feedback they get. Q. What is the failure in the leadership system that you haven’t addressed the issue?

Dis-investing to re-invest. Why do we still do HNCs?

We need a tangible FE - HE network extension. Then we would get some good connections with business.

We need to improve the ICT in Art and Design – our current provision is well below standard.

We have to end the subsidy of weak courses by strong courses.

We need to improve retention rates: students have to feel comfortable with us. We also need to improve the progression rates from degree to masters to research.
Stakeholder requirements, the CUC (2006) top-ten KPIs and the LFHE 15 key challenges should inform the business agenda. Consequently, there are no recommendations pertaining to this section of the model, other than to maintain existing good practice.

8.10 RESULTS OR OUTCOMES AND FEEDBACK – HOW WELL DID WE DO?

Actual results or outcomes are identified in many ways: management information; internal/external audits; feedback and surveys; culminating in tangible outcomes such as position in league tables or RAE exercise, achievement of standards such as IiP and Charter Mark/CSE or results from the NSS. For the most, UL has made steady year-on-year improvements as confirmed by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (L&T) in a recent internal communication:

**GOOD RESULTS FOR UL**

......the QAA Institutional Review report on [UL] has now been published. The report confirms that ‘Confidence’ can be placed in the soundness of UL’s current and likely future management of the quality of its academic programmes and the academic standards of its awards. This is the QAA’s highest accolade......Secondly the annual NSS (National Students Survey) has just been published. According to the results of this year’s Survey, UL is the most improved Higher Education Institution (HEI) in Wales and within the top-10 most improved universities UK-wide, out of the 119 participating......Many thanks to all who have contributed to these excellent commendations on the quality of our work.

The recent achievements of UL are testimony to year on year improvements. Consequently, there are no recommendations for this section of the model, other than to maintain the momentum.
8.11 REVIEW AND EVALUATION – WHAT SHOULD WE DO DIFFERENTLY?

The DTI (2008) argue that there are a number of ways to evaluate performance and that even quality-related activities can, with some care, be costed using the P-A-F model of ‘prevention’, ‘appraisal’ and ‘failure’ costs (see chapter 2 section 2.3.5). UL is particularly adept at ‘appraisal’ costs which are associated with the stakeholders’ evaluation of the organisation’s products, services or outcomes, for example NSS, QAA institutional review and periodic review. Equally, IiP, NFA, the development of a HR Strategy and the establishment of staff development as a more co-ordinated and visible function, have provided solid foundations for UL, contributing to some of the ‘prevention’ costs outlined by the DTI (2008). UL could benefit from firming up arrangements for objectively reflecting and learning from ‘failure’ costs, such as handling and resolving complaints, reworking to rectify errors, unacceptable sickness absence levels, Employment Tribunals. As one HOU stated:

'It’s about becoming more efficient and effective as well, for example, we are now collecting student fees more effectively which means less debt for the organisation and also frees up time for staff to review their systems. It’s a gradual change process – some people and systems have been here for donkey’s years – we’ve been here for 20 years and we’ve always done it this way for 20 years. OK it might actually be the best way to do it, but you need to review what you are doing to find out!' (SMGHOUM3).

Recommendations:

That UL considers developing more formal methods of reviewing and reflecting on performance, particularly in relation to ‘failure’ costs, for example through the student complaints procedure and takes remedial action where appropriate.
8.12 THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PRACTICAL MODEL AND FRAMEWORK FOR THE EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF PERFORMANCE

The unified theoretical model of performance management which was developed following a critical review of the literature in chapter two (illustrated in Figure 2.23), was tested first against the organisational case study and second against the findings from the three management groups to investigate the potential of the model for its practical application in the workplace. This assessment exercise evidenced that managers at all levels can relate to and engage with (albeit in varying degrees) each of the components in the unified theoretical model. Following these findings, a practical model and framework for the effective management of performance has been developed (see Figure 8.1).

The new model has retained all of the components from the unified theoretical model and these have now been represented using a circular model to illustrate both the holistic nature of performance management and the underlying principles of continuous improvement implicit in any performance management model.

If there were an ideal point at which to start the model, it would be with the stakeholders component, since they determine the nature of the business. The arrows linking each stage around the model indicate that there is a logical sequence to the stages, which are loosely hinged around the inner Planning, Supporting and Reviewing sections of the model. This sequence does not however preclude someone starting elsewhere in the model, recognising that
organisational life does not always flow neatly in one direction. What the sequence does try to ensure is that all components of the performance management framework are considered, since the omission of one is highly likely to impact upon the ability to engage with performance management as holistic, complex and multidisciplinary phenomenon.

An additional component part – Compliance - has been added at the centre of the model. Although it is recognised that some people in the HE sector might find such terminology objectionable, there does seem to be a growing acceptance – particularly amongst some of the UL managers, that non-compliance is an issue:

"I think that the problem that we have at UL is more about compliance rather than anything else and we ought to have people complying for the good of the organisation really – not so much accountable, although you could argue what’s the difference – it’s difficult to differentiate between the two, but compliance is a problem and I think performance management certainly helps in terms of compliance (EMG3).

A little bit of policing to make sure people are properly inducted (EMG2).

The real problem is that no one wants to take any action. You can all be told to do something and 50% of you comply but nothing happens to the other 50% that don’t comply. There’s a real non-compliance issue (SMGHOUM4).

Typically, staff costs account for 60-70% of a universities running costs and it is therefore essential that optimum performance is sought. For the most, UL has in place all the basic components required to elicit high performance and a willingness to engage with corporate systems, structure and process is displayed by many of UL’s managers. There is however a need to highlight
where there are areas of non-compliance and to take action. Hence, compliance is now a central element of the practical model and framework.

Figure 8.1: A Practical Model and Framework for the Effective Management of Performance in a HEI
8.13 SUMMARY

This research has explored the performance management phenomenon (in an HE context) through the use of an organisational case study (chapter four) and the views of three management populations, the results of which are presented in chapters five, six and seven. The assessment of UL’s performance against the unified theoretical model has revealed that whilst some good progress has been made against each element of the model, there are still some areas which are relatively underdeveloped, particularly with regard to culture, stakeholder requirements, performance measures and HRM/HRD. This may be due, in part, to the ostensible reluctance of the HE sector to pro-actively respond to an increasingly commercialised and globalised market place, preferring to wait, until cajoled by external influences such as: WAG’s agenda that HEIs engage with performance models, such as: iIP, EFQM and the BSC (WAG, 2002a); the funding council requirements to develop HR strategies and take action to tackle poor performance (HEFCW, 2003a); the UCEA NFA and harmonisation of terms and conditions (2004); the LFHE 15 key challenges (2004); the CUC’s Top-Ten KPIs (2006).

This research has revealed that the holistic, complex and multidisciplinary nature of performance management is not fully understood by many of UL’s managers. Whilst the modernisation of HR and improved performance within HE has been brought nearer to the top of the agenda, there is still some way to go before managers fully accept that people management is a critical part of their role. Long traditions of not tackling issues of poor performance and waiting until crisis point are exacerbated by poor line management
arrangements, a lack of accountability and a dislike by managers of tackling issues of poor performance. Of particular concern is the reoccurring theme of non-compliance by up to 50% of managers in some cases. The absence of an explicit performance management framework has been cited as an obstacle to managing performance. Overall there are a number of recommendations that if adopted, would contribute to the continued improvements of the university as part of the performance management agenda.

This action research is not about pointing fingers or apportioning blame for any identified shortfalls, but rather, about trying to create a performance management framework that will assist managers in focusing their efforts to maximum effect. As one member of EMG said, when asked about measuring and managing performance, “I don’t really have a clear framework for doing so and I think that has been identified as an issue” (EMG 2). The majority of UL’s middle managers (73%) were of the same opinion, evidencing that ‘UL takes a general approach to performance management with policies covering key areas such as employee development, appraisal and job evaluation, but with no overall performance management strategy’ (Chapter seven, section 7.4).

**8.14 REVIEW AND REFLECTION**

This section of the chapter serves to draw to a close the research “Towards a Framework for Performance Management in a Higher Education Institution”. It aims to review the objectives and to bring together the main findings from the research. It will also explore the contribution of this thesis, its limitations and opportunities for further research.
8.14.1 Review of Objectives

8.14.1.1 Objective One:

Undertake a critical review of the relevant literature and develop a unified theoretical HRM/HRD performance management framework

Chapter one sets the context for the research, and presents some of the current thinking behind the performance management agenda in HE, at both a national and local level. Chapter two then takes up the performance management story in more detail, through examining the literature relating to key performance management issues including some of the main HRM/HRD activities which make up the ELC.

The review of literature culminates in the development of a unified theoretical model of performance management created from a number of well established and more recently developed models in an attempt to capture the holistic, complex and multi-disciplinary nature of the phenomenon. The model is illustrated in Figure 2.23 and consists of ten main elements: culture; planning, supporting and reviewing performance; stakeholder requirements; institutional direction, strategies and plans; performance measures; structures, systems and processes; HRM/HRD; delivering the business; actual results or outcomes; review and evaluation. These components aim to provide a holistic, conceptual framework around which performance at organisational, school/unit and individual level can be effectively planned, supported and reviewed by managers.
8.14.1.2 **Objective Two:**

*Case study the development of the organisation over an eight year period, highlighting the key performance interventions and milestones*

UL was used as a case study. Chapter Four details the performance management odyssey over an eight year period, during which time a number of key performance management interventions took place, as illustrated in Table 4.2.

LiP has provided a consistent framework for engendering organisational and school/unit performance improvement, as has the corporate strategic plan and the quest for RDAPs and university title. It is not clear whether these interventions have had an accumulative effect, although it would be reasonable to think that the sum total of all the interventions over the period is probably more powerful than their individual effect.
8.14.1.3 **Objective Three:**

*Establish the overall understanding of performance management and how this is translated into practice, by exploring the perspectives, expectations and contributions of the university’s ‘managers’ at three levels*

Chapter Three details the methods deployed to elicit the required data. These included the:

- A case study of UL’s performance management journey over an eight year period (see Chapter Four);
- Verbal Observation of UL’s managers during the course of this research (see Volume Two, Section Four);
- Open-ended one-to-one interviews with UL’s EMG and SMG (see Volume Two, Sections One and Two);
- On-line semi-structured survey questionnaire with UL’s Middle Managers (see Volume Two, Section Three).

8.14.1.4 **Objective Four:**

*Critically analyse areas of congruence and dissonance between the three levels of management group, seeking to identify potential areas for improvement and making appropriate recommendations for action in relation to performance management*

Chapters Six, Seven and Eight explore the responses of the three different management groups and to assess if there are areas of congruence or
dissonance. A number of suggestions for improvements were put forward by managers as part of the research and these have been incorporated into the overall recommendations.

8.14.1.5 **Objective Five:**

*Seek to develop an appropriate HRM/HRD model for managing performance within a post-92 HEI*

The performance management interventions taken by UL (Chapter Four) and the responses from the three management populations (Chapters Five, Six and Seven) were assessed against the unified theoretical model a Practical Model and Framework for the Effective Management of Performance in a HEI was subsequently developed as a means of assisting managers in focusing their efforts to maximum effect. This model is illustrated in Figure 8.1.

8.15 **MAJOR FINDINGS AND KEY RECOMMENDATIONS**

In the space of a relatively short time, UL has made some remarkable leaps forward in terms of performance improvements. Nevertheless, there is still some way to go. The research has revealed that the holistic, complex and multidisciplinary nature of performance management is not fully understood by the majority of managers and there is still some work to do before managers fully accept that people management is a critical part of their role. Long traditions of not tackling issues of poor performance and waiting until crisis point are exacerbated by poor line management arrangements and a lack of accountability. Of particular concern is the reoccurring theme of non-
compliance in many of the HRM/HRD related areas, in some cases by up to 50% of managers. The absence of an explicit performance management framework has also been cited as an obstacle to managing performance. Overall there are a number of recommendations that if adopted, would contribute to the continued improvements of the university as part of the performance management agenda. These have been detailed at the end of chapters five, six and seven. A summary of the recommendations can be found in Appendix 13, but in essence they suggest:

- The development and adoption of a performance management framework;
- Further development of organisational/school/unit culture and values;
- Identification of stakeholder requirements to inform the business;
- Cascading of institutional objectives and priorities;
- Further definition of line management arrangements and accountabilities, supported by training and development;
- Bespoke work with managers to put in place best practice recruitment and selection, induction, probation and staff review processes;
- Monitoring of the quality and standards of HRM/HRD practices through user groups and taking action to tackle issues of non-compliance;
- Formalising career development and succession planning arrangements;
- Promoting existing pay and reward benefits to staff so that they are recognised as such;
- Formalising methods of reviewing and reflecting on performance, particularly in relation to ‘failure’ costs.
8.16 CONTRIBUTION OF THESIS

This is a topical piece of action research which has been carried out to help address HEFCW’s requirement that Welsh HEI’s take action to tackle poor performance through the development of their HR strategies. Although some previous research has been carried out on performance management in higher education (Archer, 2005; Guest and Clinton, 2007) it is a relatively new area of study. The work of Archer (2005) was based on interviews with heads of institutions and their heads of HR and Personnel at 44 UK Universities and the work of Guest and Clinton (2007) was based on a number of interviews arranged through the Universities Personnel Association (UPA) and a questionnaire returned by 63 university HR directors. Guest and Clinton (2007, p.19) state that “we should bear in mind that these are the perceptions of the HR directors. It would be interesting to compare them with the responses of the managers whose effectiveness in dealing with HR issues has been rated”. This piece of research begins to explore the views of those managers within the performance management context. Although the study was limited to UL, it is hoped that some of the findings (and hence the applicability of the recommendations) may also be typical of other post 92 institutions.

It is considered that the outcomes of this research have contributed to theory, practice and methodology in the following ways:

Theory: This research will make a contribution to the general debate on performance management, but more specifically to the performance management debate in higher education. Following a review of the literature, a
range of performance models and initiatives were drawn together to form a unified and coherent model for performance management, designed to reflect the more holistic, complex and multidisciplinary view of performance management described by Armstrong and Baron (1998); The Cranfield School of Management (2007); CIPD (2006). This was tested against the three management populations and culminated in the development of a Practical Model and Framework for the Effective Management of Performance in a HEI.

**Practice:** On a practical level, the model will enable managers to view performance in a more holistic and coherent manner, thereby guiding better management practice at organisational, school/unit and individual level. In addition, the recommendations that emanated from the research (if adopted) should contribute to better practice and the development of HRM/HRD frameworks, strategies and interventions designed to enhance the effectiveness of performance management within UL.

**Methodology:** It was considered that the research would enhance and/or contribute to pragmatic and mixed methods studies in general and in particular through the use of verbal observation (Gillham 2003) which have been developed into “Anequotes”. Additionally, the practical model could be used by other HEIs as a methodology for identifying their own strengths and development areas in relation to performance management.
8.16.1 Limitations of the Research
There were several limitations to this action research. Although it investigated the understanding and contributions of three levels of management to the performance management agenda, it was carried out in a single post-92 HEI. This has limited the comparisons that might have been drawn had it been carried out across several post-92 HEIs or within some pre-92 universities. Additionally, it has focused on the management story and has not considered the contributions of any non-management staff. Finally, because it is a piece of action research, it has a shelf life in terms of the currency of the data it has generated.

8.16.2 Opportunities for Further Research
This research has identified some gaps in terms of the practical application and management of performance across the UL HRM/HRD spectrum. There is scope for further and more in-depth research to be carried out in each of the HRM/HRD areas relating to the ELC, with a particular focus on non-management staff and their perceptions of performance management within that context.

8.17 PERSONAL REFLECTIONS
There are many words that I would choose to describe this particular research journey: enjoyable; interesting; agonising; fascinating; time-consuming; frustrating; exciting; exacting – to name but a few! There were two particular challenges, first the literature review because of the volume, choice and depth of the current literature relating to performance management when it is
considered as a holistic, complex and multidisciplinary phenomena and second, the development of the unified theoretical model in terms of ensuring it reflected the holistic, complex and multidisciplinary nature of performance management. Positively, this research has provided a much needed evidence base which has informed (and will continue to inform) UL’s HRM/HRD best practice.

A valuable personal learning point to emerge from this, is the understanding that whilst there is an urgency for change, it will not happen instantaneously. A more pragmatic approach is required, involving patience and a cognizance of the current position in order to develop. On a more personal note, it is also important to keep a sense of humour:

![Diagram of University Management Plan](image)

**University Management Plan**

Our thrusting Director of Corporate Affairs, Jamie Targett, has asked us to point out that there was "an unfortunate error" in our reproduction last week of Schedule 14 of the university's new Management Plan. In the above diagram, there should obviously be a double arrow between Balanced Portfolio and Sausages, and a single positive directional arrow between Changement Potential and Marmalade. Please also note that the line between Marmalade and External Orientation should be dotted rather than solid so as to indicate its contingent nature. We hope this clarifies the situation.

Source: Taylor (2009), Times Higher Education, 2 April 2009, p.96
Towards A Framework For Performance Management In A Higher Education Institution

April 2009
BIBLIOGRAPHY:


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Appendix 1: UL’s Motto, Vision, Mission, Ethos & Values

Our Motto:

“The most valuable possession is knowledge”

Our Vision:

To be a premier provider of higher education that promotes student employability, applied research and knowledge transfer.

Our Mission:

- To provide student-centred learning opportunities that are accessible, flexible, inclusive, lifelong and of the highest quality.
- To provide a culture within which applied research and enterprise will flourish.
- To develop established and new centres of excellence in professional education, applied research and knowledge transfer.
- To provide services that meet the needs of Wales and wider communities by working in partnership with city, national and international bodies

Our Ethos:

The following are the foundations upon which UWIC will engage with other institutions to plan the future together. We are committed to:

- Independent scholarship, relevant application, curiosity-driven learning.
- Excellence in everything we do.
- Improvements through ideas and insights transforming the people and the organisation.
- Creativity and innovation, inspiring new ideas and applying knowledge in new ways to create value.
- Collaboration for competitive advantage.
- Building on the past.
- A collegiate approach to learning and research.
- Interdisciplinary orientation.
- Building on our presence in the Cardiff Metropolitan area.

Our Values:

- Respect for individuals, helping them realise their potential and value lifelong learning
- Environment based on commitment, teamwork, and good leadership and management practices which is positive and friendly
• Sharing a common purpose founded upon honesty, integrity, openness, objectivity, accountability and selflessness and supported by leadership and example.
• Pride and ownership in UWIC and its development
• Excellence achieved through the pursuit of continual improvement in all that we do
• Community that is inclusive and we promote and support these principles by leadership and example.
• The most valuable possession is knowledge

Appendix 2: Performance Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTCOME</th>
<th>To successfully attract £X amount of research funding from the research councils (EFFECTIVENESS)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OUTPUT</td>
<td>Increase the number of research bids submitted by X researchers to research councils by X number (EFFICIENCY)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INPUT</td>
<td>Train X number of researchers to write winning research bids (ECONOMY)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESOURCES</td>
<td>Invest £X to bring in an external expert on writing successful research bids. (COST and TIME = ECONOMY)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix 3: Criteria for Performance Indicators

PISG undertook its first formal review of the PIs in 2006-07. As part of the review, a set of criteria were devised so as to be able to assess - with some measure of objectivity – the continued relevance of the existing indicators as well as the validity of any newly-proposed indicators. The assessment criteria include that:

• The data to be used for the indicator should be robust, reliable, and fit for purpose.
• The indicator should provide information for HEIs that is suitable both for their internal use and for benchmarking themselves against other similar institutions.
• The indicator should provide information for government stakeholders that is suitable for informing policy development.
• The indicator should provide information for other stakeholders that is suitable for their purposes.
• There must be general agreement on whether high values of the indicator represent a positive or a negative outcome.
• The indicator should not lead to perverse behaviour.
• Indicators that do not come into one of the existing categories (access/widening participation; non-continuation/retention; employment; and research) should be looked at more closely than those that do, in particular to ensure that the PISG is not duplicating work that is being done by other bodies. (HEFCE, 2007).

Appendix 4: The European Foundation for Quality Management Model

The European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) was founded in 1988, by the presidents of 14 major European companies (Bosch, BT, Bull, Ciba-Geigy, Dassault, Electrolux, Fiat, KLM, Nestle, Olivetti, Philips, Renault, Sulzer and Volkswagen with the endorsement of the European Commission. The impetus for this powerful management network was the need to develop a European framework for quality improvement along the lines of the Malcolm Baldrige model in the USA and the Deming prize in Japan, both of which had demonstrably been seen to improve service and manufacturing quality in the organisations that used them (EFQM, 2008).

According to the EFQM, the Excellence Model is used by over 20,000 organisations across Europe, by 60% of Europe’s largest companies and by 9 of the 13 European companies cited in the FT’s 50 World’s Most Respected Companies (Sheffield Hallam University, 2003).
The European Model for Business Excellence, now called the EFQM – Excellence Model was introduced in 1991 as the framework for organisational self-assessment and as the basis for judging entrants to the European Quality Award, which was awarded for the first time in 1992. The model comprises nine different criteria - five ‘Enablers’ and four ‘Results’:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENABLERS</th>
<th>RESULTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criterion 1: Leadership</td>
<td>Criterion 6: People Results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criterion 2: People</td>
<td>Criterion 7: Customer Results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criterion 3: Policy and Strategy</td>
<td>Criterion 8: Society Results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criterion 4: Partnership and Resources</td>
<td>Criterion 9: Key Performance Results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criterion 5: Processes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Within each of the criterion are sub-criteria which define the actions organisations must take in order to achieve the desired results. In short, ‘Results’ are caused by ‘Enablers’ and feedback from the ‘Results’ through the organisational learning loop ‘Innovation and Learning’ informs and improves the ‘Enablers’.

**Appendix 5: The Four Perspectives of the Balanced Scorecard**

*The Learning and Growth Perspective*

In the current climate of political, environmental, sociological and technological change, it has become ever more important for knowledge-worker organisations such as HEIs to gain and maintain competitive advantage. Staff must therefore
continuously develop their skills, knowledge and aptitudes, in order to deliver on a high quality student experience. This perspective focuses on the importance of identifying the required skills, knowledge and attitude and then putting in place metrics which assist managers in focusing training funds to areas where they make the most impact. The Learning and Growth perspective also recognises that there is more to learning than attending training courses and includes having in place high performance work systems such as the intranet and virtual learning environments as well as ensuring that communication throughout the organisation is such that problems can not only be identified and solved, but that the organisation can learn from its mistakes.

**The Business Perspective**

Kaplan and Norton (1992) identify two kinds of internal business processes in addition to the strategic management processes – a) mission-orientated processes and b) support processes. The metrics based on this perspective allow managers to assess how well their business (products and services) is performing against the organisations vision, mission and strategic objectives (hence mission –orientated processes). If the metrics applied to this perspective are to be meaningful they need to be carefully designed by those who know and understand the processes best, as opposed to engaging external consultants. The support processes are often easier to measure and benchmark against because they often tend to be more repetitive in nature than the more specialised, mission-orientated interventions.
The Customer Perspective

This is a critical perspective in which levels of customer satisfaction are measured in relation to the requirements of the various stakeholder groups. Metrics developed in this perspective can be leading indicators. Kaplan and Norton (1992) note that “if customers are not satisfied, they will eventually find other suppliers that will meet their needs. Poor performance from this perspective is thus a leading indicator of future decline, even though the current financial picture may look good”. (Balanced Scorecard Institute, 2007)

The Financial Perspective

Kaplan and Norton (1992) make a point of retaining the traditional financial measures in their model whilst also emphasizing the need to “create future value through investment in customers, suppliers, employees, processes, technology and innovation” (Balanced Scorecard Institute, 2007). They suggest that quantitative measures to assess the financial area can be developed under three main headings:

- Revenue Growth – for example sales and market share, number of new customers and markets;
- Cost Management – for example revenue per employee, unit cost reduction;
- Asset Utilisation – for example productivity/efficiency, return on capital.

They also suggest that organisations could usefully include in this perspective, additional financial related data such as risk assessment and cost benefit data.
Appendix 6: The Investors in People Standard

The Investors in People Standard was first created in 1990 as a result of the Government’s wishes to improve business performance in the UK. The standard provides a national framework for improving business performance and hence competitiveness, using a planned approach to setting and communicating business objectives and then developing people to meet those objectives. The standard dovetails well with other quality models and tools such as ISO9001:2000 or EFQM and is described by Investors in People UK (2008b) as a “business improvement tool designed to advance an organisation’s performance through its people”.

Essentially, the IiP standard is made up of ten key indicators with 39 evidence indicators, represented as a continuous cycle of required actions designed to engender a culture of continuous improvement.

Following the introduction of the revised standard in 2005, there is now a much greater emphasis on the role of the manager in terms of leading and managing the development of people. In response to employer feedback, IiP UK has also developed and introduced a number of stand-alone models, e.g. Work-life Balance Model, Leadership and Management Model, and Recruitment and Selection Model. Organisations can use these models to assess the effectiveness of their own strategies or develop strategies, where required.
Since its initial development undertaken by 22 leading national organisations, over 30,000 organisations have achieved the standard (IiP, 2008b). Organisations can now be provided with a more ‘in-depth’ assessment report when measuring up against the standard, through the use of a new profiling framework which determines a level of good practice for each indicator:

- **Level 1** represents an organisation meeting the Standard and demonstrating good practice.
- **Level 2** represents an organisation exceeding the requirements of the Standard. This is shown by their achievement of at least 50% of the level 2 and 3 statements.
- **Level 3** represents an organisation significantly exceeding the requirements of the Standard. This is shown by their achievement of all the level 2 and 3 statements.
- **Level 4** represents an organisation demonstrating excellent practice. This is shown by their achievement of all the level 4 requirements.

**Appendix 7: Charter Mark for Excellence**

Charter Mark is the government's national standard and quality improvement scheme for customer service in the public sector. The standard focuses on the results that the customer actually receives.

Originally launched in 1992, it has been since updated by the Prime Minister's Office of Public Services Reform in order to more closely reflect government priorities, reduce bureaucracy and to make it easier for applicants to apply. The current scheme became fully operational in early 2004 and also includes a new web based self-assessment tool. There are currently six criteria associated with the standard. Meeting the criteria demonstrates that the organisation not only focuses on its customers, but aims to continuously improve and give value-for-
money. By reaching the standard, organisations can show that they put their customers first.

- **Criterion 1: Set standards and perform well**
- **Criterion 2: Actively engage with your customers, partners and staff**
- **Criterion 3: Be fair and accessible to everyone and promote choice**
- **Criterion 4: Continuously develop and improve**
- **Criterion 5: Use your resources effectively and imaginatively**
- **Criterion 6: Contribute to improving opportunities and quality of life in the communities you serve**

(Cabinet Office, 2007)

**Appendix 8: The Health and Safety Executive Management Standards**

**DEMANDS** - Includes issues like workload work patterns, and the work environment.

The standard is that:
- Employees indicate that they are able to cope with the demands of their jobs.
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

What should be happening/states to be achieved:
- The organisation provides employees with adequate and achievable demands in relation to the agreed hours of work.
- People’s skills and abilities are matched to the job demands.
- Jobs are designed to be within the capabilities of employees.
- Employees’ concerns about their work environment are addressed.

**UCEA Working Group comment:** To achieve this standard is more a matter of developing a style of management and communication, which takes individuals and their needs into consideration, rather than creating new systems and structures. Nevertheless, there may need to be some revision of what is already in place and some degree of upgrading existing systems.
CONTROL - How much say the person has in the way they do their work.

The standard is that:
- Employees indicate that they are able to have a say about the way they do their work.
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

What should be happening/states to be achieved:
- Where possible, employees have control over their pace of work.
- Employees are encouraged to use their skills and initiative to do their work.
- Where possible, employees are encouraged to develop new skills to help them undertake new and challenging pieces of work.
- The organisation encourages employees to develop their skills.
- Employees have a say over when breaks can be taken.
- Employees are consulted over their work patterns.

**UCEA Working Group comment:** To achieve this standard requires effective two-way communication and consultation with all staff. This should be readily achievable through existing channels such as informed discussions with supervisors/line managers, individual performance development reviews, open-door policies, team meetings and participation in drawing up job descriptions.

SUPPORT - Includes the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues.

The standard is that:
- Employees indicate that they receive adequate information and support from their colleagues and superiors.
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

What should be happening/states to be achieved:
- The organisation has policies and procedures to adequately support employees.
- Systems are in place to enable and encourage managers to support their staff.
- Systems are in place to enable and encourage employees to support their colleagues.
- Employees know what support is available and how and when to access it.
- Employees know how to access the required resources to do their job.
- Employees receive regular and constructive feedback.
UCEA Working Group comment: To achieve this standard requires supervisors, team leaders and managers to ensure that members of staff are equipped with the necessary skills and information to carry out their jobs effectively. Personal development plans could be one method of approach.

RELATIONSHIPS - Includes promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour.

The standard is that:
- Employees indicate that they are not subjected to unacceptable behaviours, e.g. bullying at work.
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

What should be happening/states to be achieved:
- The organisation promotes positive behaviours at work to avoid conflict and ensure fairness.
- Employees share information relevant to their work.
- The organisation has agreed policies and procedures to prevent or resolve unacceptable behaviour.
- Systems are in place to enable and encourage managers to deal with unacceptable behaviour.
- Systems are in place to enable and encourage employees to report unacceptable behaviour.

UCEA Working Group comment: To achieve this standard, institutions should review their current policies and procedures for dealing with unacceptable behaviour at work and bring these to the attention of all staff as part of raising awareness.

ROLE - Whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that the person does not have conflicting roles.

The standard is that:
- Employees indicate that they understand their role and responsibilities.
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.
What should be happening/states to be achieved:

- The organisation ensures that, as far as possible, the different requirements it places upon employees are compatible.
- The organisation provides information to enable employees to understand their role and responsibilities.
- The organisation ensures that, as far as possible, the requirements it places upon employees are clear.
- Systems are in place to enable employees to raise concerns about any uncertainties or conflicts they have in their roles and responsibilities.

**UCEA Working Group comment:** To achieve this standard, institutions may need to review their present procedures for personal development reviews and encourage staff to make their line managers aware of any issues in this area.

**CHANGE - How organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation.**

The standard is that:

- Employees indicate that the organisation engages them frequently when undergoing an organisational change.
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

What should be happening/states to be achieved:

- The organisation provides employees with timely information to enable them to understand the reasons for proposed changes.
- The organisation ensures adequate employee consultation on changes and provides opportunities for employees to influence proposals.
- Employees are aware of the probable impact of any changes to their jobs. If necessary, employees are given training to support any changes in their jobs.
- Employees are aware of timetables for changes.
- Employees have access to relevant support during changes.

**UCEA Working Group comment:** To achieve this standard, institutions may need to review their methodologies and procedures for consulting with staff prior to implementing any significant changes that impact upon individuals.
Appendix 9: Probation Criteria at Durham University (2007)

A. Research Activity

- Number of postgraduate students
- Income generation -comparison with average for the subject or research group within subject.
- Number and quality of research applications.
- Patents held, contracts won, research income gained, research grants awarded from Research Councils, charitable foundations using ‘peer judgements’ e.g. Leverhulme, Wolfson; other charitable foundations.
- Invitations to hold visiting research posts abroad, prizes and awards, international reputation.

B. Teaching, Range and Quantity

- List of undergraduate and/or postgraduate courses/modules taught since appointment, or in the last five years, comparison with average departmental teaching load, number of students taking each course.
- External examining experience gained at undergraduate level, postgraduate courses given, higher degrees supervised and examined (internally and externally), invitations to accept visiting teaching posts abroad.

C. Teaching, competence

Range is from competent to excellent. Criteria are:

- Curriculum development (see below).
- Introduction of innovative teaching methods.
- Excellence in course delivery and assessment.
- Any combination of these criteria.
- Staff development courses attended, internal and external, relevant to teaching.
- Contributing to a professional journal devoted to the teaching of the subject, critical studies, editorial work, compilations.

D. Curriculum Development

- Initiatives taken in the area of course design or redesign.
- Text books or other teaching material written; new courses devised.
- Service as Course Director, Course Leader or Co-ordinator, membership of a course committee or similar post concerned with teaching.

E. Feedback on Teaching

- Number of research students supervised since appointment or in the last 5 years, submission and success rates.
- Peer review reports to supplement student feedback.
- May include a brief report on course questionnaire results or the results (suitably monitored) of student questionnaires.
- Evidence that student evaluation is sought and acted upon by submission of summary of full range of student feedback questionnaires.
- Could include invitations to teach for outside agencies, provide guest lectures, act as a consultant.

F. Academic Leadership

- Significant contribution to the development of other staff.

G. Administration

Significant contribution:

- Major University committees or working parties.
- Student welfare, acting as College Tutor, admissions, schools liaison, the University's regional profile; acting as a University Assessor; leading QAA submission.
- University-wide managerial responsibilities, e.g. in the area of health & safety
- Significant faculty and/or departmental responsibilities.
- Management of facilities e.g. specialised laboratories or workshops.

H. Other external income generation

- Via University not private work.
- Promotional activities for University not self-promotion.

I. Strategic fit**

- Appropriateness of individual's subject area and/or research to University Strategy.

J. Special factors**

- Career breaks, service prior to appointment.

**It is not expected that these two factors will apply in many individual cases; where they do, they shall be positive factors only.
Appendix 10: Designing and Implementing Appraisal in the HE Sector

- Ensure that the design of the scheme reflects institutional/departmental culture and values;
- Agree a scheme that is positive and encourages staff rather than threatens and judges;
- Be clear about the aims and objectives of the scheme and how they fit into the institution's aims and business plan;
- Be specific about the name of the scheme and widely publicize it;
- State how the process fits in with other human resource/personnel policies;
- Link target setting/work planning to both personal and organisational development;
- Ensure equality of opportunity. Give all levels and categories of staff the opportunity to participate in the process;
- Communicate effectively about how the scheme will operate;
- Get agreement from line managers and trade unions;
- Provide support and impetus from senior managers;
- Be clear about who is doing the reviewing – have effective reporting structure in place;
- Make sure all staff are trained to operate the scheme effectively – pay attention to interpersonal skills;
- Provide guidance notes;
- Make paperwork simple and cut down on administrative time;
- Be clear about the confidentiality aspects of the information shared in the meeting;
- Encourage two-way feedback;
- Ensure that what's agreed actually happens and resources for training and development are made available;
- Ensure time is allowed for meaningful appraisal discussions to take place;
- Have an agreed appeals procedure to follow when there is a disagreement of views;
- Promote the benefits of the scheme and what actually gets done – most schemes fail because of lack of interest, poor skill in carrying out the discussion, and no action or feedback on outcomes of the meeting;
- Review and evaluate the progress of the scheme.

Appendix 11: UL's Campuses

The Tuscan Campus is the location for the Llareggub School of Health Sciences, and part of the Llareggub School of Art & Design. It also houses the National Centre for Product Design & Development Research (PDR), a Podiatry Centre and a Speech Language Therapy centre. UL’s Central Administration is based on this campus including the Executive Management Group (EMG), as well as all the support services.

The Ionic Campus is the location for the Llareggub School of Education and the Llareggub School of Sport. The campus also houses the UL Student Union headquarters as well as a major student residence centre with over 500 study bedrooms.

The Doric Avenue Campus is the current location for the Llareggub School of Management and a training restaurant which is open to the public and operated (under supervision) by students as part of their hospitality management training programme.

The Corinthian Gardens Campus is located in the middle of the town centre and houses the Llareggub School of Art & Design, as well as UL’s Corinthian Gardens Art Gallery.
Appendix 12: UL’s Staff Development Panel, Terms of Reference

- To develop, monitor and evaluate a Corporate Staff Development Programme and associated Staff Development activities within the context of UL’s Corporate Strategic Plan.
- To ensure that staff development activity is represented across the full range of UL’s business.
- To develop and address the key themes identified by the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW).
- To actively participate in steering, monitoring, reviewing and evaluating key areas of staff development activity such as Policy Development; Training Needs Analysis; LiP; Staff Review and Development; Continuous Professional Development; and the evaluation of corporate Staff Development Activity that supports and develops initiatives within the Corporate Strategic Plan e.g. achieving Research Degree Awarding Powers (RDAPS), Teaching Excellence and Widening Participation.
- To be responsible for prioritising staff development activity in line with the budget.
- To meet regularly and appropriately in terms of informing UL’s Corporate Business cycle.
- To ensure that staff development activity and progress is reported on a regular basis to EMG and Human Resources Committee (HRC).

Members of the panel should at all times represent a corporate interest and not a personal interest.
### Appendix 13: Summary of overall recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECOMMENDATION</th>
<th>EMG</th>
<th>SMG</th>
<th>MM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Performance Management Framework</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoption of a performance management model would</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>provide a better understanding of the complex and</td>
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<tr>
<td>multi-disciplinary nature of performance management</td>
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<tr>
<td>as well as a more structured framework for</td>
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<tr>
<td>managing performance holistically.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>A briefing session should be required (for each</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>management group) on the performance management</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>model outlining management roles and responsibilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>within that context and emphasising the contribution</td>
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<tr>
<td>of people development to continuous improvement.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Performance Measures</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>The organisation would benefit from further</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>promulgating the CUC (2006) KPIs and further</td>
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<tr>
<td>advancing the use of the (corporate) BSC</td>
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<tr>
<td>vertically and horizontally through the management</td>
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<tr>
<td>levels within UL, so that managers and staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>can make a rational connection between top level</td>
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<tr>
<td>indicators, school/unit indicators and individual</td>
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<tr>
<td>performance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>That EMG/SMG should determine and make known</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>throughout the organisation which benchmarking</td>
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<tr>
<td>measures are useful and which are not. This will</td>
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<tr>
<td>ensure that valuable comparisons take place and</td>
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<tr>
<td>that only relevant data is collected.</td>
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<tr>
<td>There is a need to make explicit the criteria</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>against which performance will be measured and to</td>
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<tr>
<td>ensure this is communicated to the next level of</td>
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<tr>
<td>management.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staff Development and Training</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff development activity should be planned to</td>
<td></td>
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<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>support staff in their roles. It is recommended</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>that each school/unit provide an annual staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>development plan to EMG members as part of this</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>process.</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a need to plan staff development activity</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to support staff in their roles. It is suggested</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>that each school/unit monitor individual staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>development arrangements which in turn will</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>inform an annual school/unit staff development</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>plan.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Training and development opportunities should be provided for managers in some of the softer skill areas such as:

- **How to have those awkward performance conversations with staff**

And some of the procedural/legislative areas such as:

- **How to conduct effective investigations and stay within the law**

| Training and development opportunities | X | X | X |

There needs to be some more formal HRM/HRD training in managing performance for example through setting objectives and in understanding and complying with some of the key HR policies and processes such as induction, probation, staff performance review, capability, sickness absence, grievance and discipline.

| There needs to be some more formal HRM/HRD training | X | X | X |

The recruitment and selection processes need to then be supported by some bite sized training modules for example, writing JDs and PSs, Interviewing techniques, Job analysis and evaluation, immigration law, equalities legislation etc. so that managers understand their role within the process.

| The recruitment and selection processes need to then be supported by some bite sized training modules | X | X | X |

There is a need to develop a more robust coaching and mentoring framework within UL to support staff in their roles.

| There is a need to develop a more robust coaching and mentoring framework | X | X | X |

It would be advantageous to engage a firm of solicitors to provide a bespoke session to EMG and SMG on key HR responsibilities and accountabilities.

| It would be advantageous to engage a firm of solicitors to provide a bespoke session to EMG and SMG | X | X |

Ensure that training on the concept of performance management is available to all managers and staff across the university so that there is a shift in culture where review becomes a part of the norm rather than the exception. For consistency across the organisation, managers need to view the review process as a tool for performance management.

| Ensure that training on the concept of performance management is available to all managers and staff across the university so that there is a shift in culture where review becomes a part of the norm rather than the exception. For consistency across the organisation, managers need to view the review process as a tool for performance management. | X | X | X |

Implement formal management development training arrangements, for example Future Leaders Programme, Heads of Department Programmes, through the LFHE and encourage the further use of existing management development training for example e-learning resources and one day events.

| Implement formal management development training arrangements, for example Future Leaders Programme, Heads of Department Programmes, through the LFHE and encourage the further use of existing management development training for example e-learning resources and one day events. | X | X | X |
It is recommended that the knowledge and skills levels required by a middle manager at UL be assessed formally through the staff performance review process in order that any gaps can be addressed through appropriate training and development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structures, systems and processes</th>
<th>EMG</th>
<th>SMG</th>
<th>MM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is a need to review UL’s performance management processes e.g. the capability procedure to ensure that they are fit for purpose and owned by the top team.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look at ways of minimising the gap between the Dean of School/Head of Unit and the next level down, for example through the use of Deputy roles.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a need to put in place firmer line management arrangements (particularly in the schools) supported by training so that managers are equipped to undertake their role;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture</th>
<th>EMG</th>
<th>SMG</th>
<th>MM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In line with the KPMG (2005) recommendations, facilitate a culture shift where review becomes part of the norm rather than the exception, perhaps through the compliance route and HSE standards.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust should not replace day-to-day management arrangements – there is a need to change the perception of staff and managers so that both are seen as important.</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a need to explore further, staff attitudes and perceptions as part of the performance management agenda in order to establish and address pockets of negative culture;</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy and Policy</th>
<th>EMG</th>
<th>SMG</th>
<th>MM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>That UL consider developing a reward strategy and publicise current rewards more widely to staff so that they are viewed as benefits, for example the contributory pension scheme, generous annual leave, occupational health etc.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMG may wish to consider the relevance of broader input into the development of the HR strategy as a means of encouraging wider ownership of HR related aims, objectives and targets.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SMG compliance with HR policy and processes needs to be monitored by EMG and appropriate action taken if issues of non-compliance are identified. | X |

Middle management compliance with HR policy and processes needs to be monitored by SMG and appropriate action taken if issues of non-compliance are identified. | X |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recruitment and Selection</th>
<th>EMG</th>
<th>SMG</th>
<th>MM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is a need to review the UL recruitment and selection processes and guidelines to ensure they are fit for purpose.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

That further consideration be given to the improvements sought by EMG in the recruitment and selection process:
- The abolition of ‘paper’ based recruitment and selection processes (as in the applications for Professorship and Readership) (EMG1);
- The freedom to be able to gather other people’s impressions of candidates as part of a wider selection process (EMG3);
- The introduction of presentations across the organisation for positions relating to teaching and learning (EMG2);
- The establishment of a stronger ‘corporate’ link between organisational and academic aspirations and the better matching of skilled individuals to those requirements through the recruitment and selection process (EMG4). | X |

That further consideration be given to the improvements sought by SMG in the recruitment process at UL:
- Budgets limit where we can go in the market
- Get feedback from those who were unsuccessful
- We try to do recruitment ‘on the cheap’
- Making sure references are properly scanned
- Scrutiny of contracts
- Flexibility needed in terms of filling vacancies
- Process needs a complete overhaul – not user friendly
- Staff applications process too slow
- Have the references at the interview
- The way we advertise jobs is boring
- How to write good JDs and PS and how to do a good job analysis
- Presentations and other forms of skills testing needed at interview for different roles. | X |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Induction</th>
<th>EMG</th>
<th>SMG</th>
<th>MM</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is recommended that HR work on a bespoke basis with the top team to agree and put in place corporate standards for induction across UL.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>That arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of induction at a corporate level are agreed and implemented;</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>It is recommended that HR work on a bespoke basis with Heads of Schools and Units to put in place local standards for induction within schools and units.</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>That arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of induction at a school/unit level are agreed and implemented;</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That issues of non-compliance by SMG are identified by EMG and appropriate action taken;</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That further consideration be given to the improvements sought by EMG in the induction process at UL:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>➢ A specific induction programme for programme directors to ensure that they fully understood their role, level of authority and academic procedures;</td>
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<tr>
<td>➢ The formalisation of a UL mentoring process across the organisation to assist in supporting new staff during their induction;</td>
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<tr>
<td>➢ The re-introduction of a face-to-face corporate induction programme for new staff.</td>
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<tr>
<td>That further consideration be given to the improvements sought by SMG in the induction process at UL:</td>
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<tr>
<td>➢ Get staff to sign to say they have read and understood our policies</td>
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<tr>
<td>➢ Improve induction so that it is done properly at a local level</td>
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<tr>
<td>➢ Keeping existing staff updated with corporate information</td>
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<tr>
<td>➢ Up to date structure of the organisation so that people know where to go</td>
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<tr>
<td>➢ Break induction down into manageable chunks so it isn’t overload</td>
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<tr>
<td>➢ Key facts about UL</td>
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<tr>
<td>➢ Don’t loose the personal side of induction – not all electronic</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
- Training managers in how to conduct an effective induction
- Get new staff set up on systems quickly so that they can operate straight away
- Standardize practices across schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Probation</th>
<th>EMG</th>
<th>SMG</th>
<th>MM</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is recommended that HR work on a bespoke basis with the top team to re-affirm corporate standards for probation across UL, for example policy and procedure and to agree arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of probation across UL;</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>It is recommended that HR work on a bespoke basis with the Heads of Schools and Units to agree and put in place local standards for probation within schools and units.</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of probation at a school/unit level are agreed and implemented;</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That issues of non-compliance by SMG are identified by EMG and appropriate action taken;</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>That further consideration be given to the improvements sought by EMG in the probation process at UL:</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Extending the probationary period (EMG4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Understanding the administrative processes and protocols (EMG2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- A better link between induction and probation with clear probationary schedules, regular reviews and written confirmation upon successful completion (EMG1).</td>
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<tr>
<td>That further consideration be given to the improvements sought by SMG in the probation process at UL:</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Strengthen up the probationary period to address underperformance issues and people not doing the things that are expected of them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- More regular forms of probationary meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff review</td>
<td>EMG</td>
<td>SMG</td>
<td>MM</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>It is expected (as part of staff review) that all staff should have a number of agreed SMART work and development objectives (linked to UL’s strategies and plans). Members of EMG/SMG are advised to consider what steps might be taken to combat corporate non-compliance.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is expected (as part of staff review) that all staff should have a review as well as a set of SMART work and development objectives (linked to UL's strategies and plans). Middle managers, many of whom have responsibilities as reviewers, are advised to take action to ensure that all reviews take place within their area of responsibility and that all members of staff have SMART objectives to work to.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review the existing scheme to create a more performance orientated one i.e. one which requires the assessment of performance against objectives;</td>
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<tr>
<td>In line with Archer (2005), it is recommended that appropriate line-management structures are in place to facilitate the staff performance review process and that managers understand their role and responsibilities within that context;</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put in place monitoring and evaluation processes for staff performance review – are reviews taking place? Are they being carried out effectively?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review the existing scheme to create a more performance orientated one i.e. one which requires the assessment of performance against objectives. Produce guidelines on SMARTER objective setting as part of the process.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put in place monitoring and evaluation processes for staff performance review – are reviews taking place? Are they being carried out effectively? Issues of non-compliance are identified by EMG and SMG and appropriate action taken;</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
That further consideration be given to the improvements sought by EMG in the staff review process at UL:

- Need to take a more hard-nosed performance orientated stance in relation to appraisal (EMG4).
- Managing expectations about staff development and making processes between support and academic staff more equitable (EMG1).
- There needs to be a performance management element to the staff review scheme

That further consideration be given to the improvements sought by SMG in the staff review process at UL:

- Needs to be more monitoring and evaluation of the process
- There needs to be a stronger link to the objectives and plans
- There needs to be a more formal assessment of performance against objectives

### Succession Planning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SHEET</th>
<th>EMG</th>
<th>SMG</th>
<th>MM</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work on a bespoke basis with individual members to look at charting and implementing formal succession planning arrangements for their particular area of responsibility, for example utilising the shared knowledge and practice model promoted by EMG4;</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop a fast track pool of multi-skilled staff who can resource a variety of vacancies – perhaps through the Concordat arrangements for research staff;</td>
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<td>Work on a bespoke basis with individual members of SMG to look at mapping out and implementing formal succession planning arrangements for their particular area of responsibility, for example the shared knowledge and practice model promoted by EMG4.</td>
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<td>Develop a fast track pool of multi-skilled staff who can resource a variety of vacancies – perhaps through the Concordat arrangements for research staff;</td>
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That further consideration be given to the improvements sought by EMG in the succession planning process at UL:

- Enabling academics to excel in management roles with a more corporate focus.

**Reward**

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That further consideration be given to the suggestions given by SMG for the types of reward that academic and support managers would like to see in place, set out in Figures 6.1 and 6.2 when developing a reward strategy.

**GENERAL COMMENTS**

At the end of the one-to-one interview, HsOSs and HsOUs were invited to make any other comments they had in relation to performance management. These are detailed in Figure 6.3 but are summarised as follows:

- It is far better to manage through consensus.
- It would be nice to have some formal management development training rather than having to just develop as you go along.
- We need more social space for meetings and innovation.
- We need to be skilled in dealing with problems as they occur, or else the problems just snowball.
- A weakness is that there is no definition or clear boundaries between the responsibilities of different people.
- Why isn’t HE like primary and secondary school? They are the same in a way – we’ve just got senior students rather than children.

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That further consideration be given to the suggestions by middle managers in relation to improving performance at UL:

- **Leadership and Direction**
- **Academic Versus Support (the “Them and Us”)**
- **Staff Development and Communication**
- **Systems and Practice**

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TOWARDS A FRAMEWORK FOR PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IN A HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

VOLUME TWO – SUPPLEMENTARY EVIDENCE

ALLISON O’REILLY, MSc. FCIPD.

Thesis submitted to the Cardiff School of Management in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

2009

The Cardiff School of Management
University of Wales Institute, Cardiff
Colchester Avenue
Cardiff, UK, CF23 9XR
SECTION ONE

A View From The Top

Transcribed Interviews from UL’s Executive Management Group

April 2009
SECTION ONE: A VIEW FROM THE TOP – TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEWS FROM UL’S EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT GROUP

UNDERSTANDING THE TERM PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

What in your opinion constitutes performance – how would you describe it? What does it mean to you as a member of the EMG?

Well, there are all sorts of practical things about performance so for example when we report through committees and boards it’s very important to me that people meet their deadlines about giving me draft papers, because if they don’t, then I go to board ill-prepared and the board then assesses my performance as being poor yeah? So I’m fundamentally dependant here, because most of the reports and papers that go to committee are usually drafted by someone else – so if I’m constantly chasing papers at the last minute then I would think about that seriously because that lets me down – and then I go to committee and find spelling errors in it, or I haven’t thought about it or I haven’t been fully briefed about the issues and all in front of a very public audience of the board. It makes me look silly, and it makes the EMG look silly, so it lets me down and it lets the Vice-Chancellor down. So just on a practical level – and I think that goes for all the managers I manage – I’ve just given you a paper example, but we all have budgets. Now, if all my managers overshoot their budgets then that is a performance issue. I took over the line management of the X when its budget was effectively out of control – you know, it was creeping up from 20K to 30K and it was up to 50K deficit and I had to find ways of getting on top of that and getting someone to manage that – and you know the history of that. And now we’ve got it down to 30 – 35K, we’re getting indications of good performance. Again, it’s a very, very public arena if your budgets are not sound. I mean, I think it’s poor performance at the organisational level when you’ve got these disjunctures – some of which we were just discussing before you came in the room – which leads sections to ‘blame off’ on other sections for things having gone wrong. You know, and not assuming responsibility for sorting things out but just sitting and ‘blaming off’ and pointing the finger. I mean that’s a very bad indicator – or a very good indicator of bad performance. Just things not being ‘Ship Shape or Bristol fashion’, you know, things that are old and out of date on the websites, critical documents not being kept up to date, critical documents not being written in plain English for people, or written in Welsh – a whole host of things that give a bad image and show that people have been less than diligent in their work – for example someone gives me a set of numbers and when I add them up, they don’t add up to the total given at the bottom – it’s just stuff like that that appears shoddy yeah? Things that are not checked, things that are not presented well, those sorts of things and actually people don’t like being picked up on those sorts of things because they seem quite nit-picking really, but if people don’t pay attention to detail at that level, then that sort of detail gets wider and wider and wider and it becomes a very bad problem to deal with. (EMG1)
Well performance at this level is very much about the performance of the organisation isn’t it? I’m constantly aware of the indicators and benchmarks that the institution has to perform to and how they are met and for me it’s very much about moving us towards excellence and imbuing quality enhancement which is very, very important. Building on our strengths and sensitively dealing with our weaknesses – not going in there and laying the law down and thrashing people, but being aware of where the weak areas are and determining how to bring them forward and disseminate best practice. (EMG2)

There’s a simple definition that I adhere to – I didn’t get this straight out of a book, although it can be found in lots of literature – and that is that people realise that there are a set of objectives that are set for them, either in an appraisal or an interview by their manager and it’s the realisation and evaluation at particular stages of those objectives or targets, and how these benefit the organisation, because whatever objectives you set, they have to have two elements – there’s the personal element but there also has to be the organisational element as well. (EMG3)

I guess in a simplistic way, performance management is for me, about all members of staff at whatever level throughout UL, contributing to the overall corporate strategic objectives. So for me, if I take a sort of simplistic view, if we have a set of priorities for example RDAPs or academic priorities, performance for me is the achievement of those, and I guess that kind of comes down to targets – so if you have a set of priorities you then need to untangle those, so for example, if to be a premier provider of knowledge transfer in the UK is a priority, then the question I ask is how do we achieve that through performance and that target? So for the organisation, I would maybe say that over the next five years we want 50 KTPs in place. That then needs to be thought through in terms of what part of the organisation can deliver, so that then becomes about setting targets for that part of the organisation, but setting targets that are owned and understood, and setting targets in such a way that if there are resource implications for the individuals that are having to deliver, those resource implications are discussed and agreed and put in place. (EMG4)
MEASURING AND MANAGING PERFORMANCE AT SCHOOL/UNIT LEVEL

How do you currently measure and manage performance at school/unit level within your portfolio of responsibility?

Well, my portfolio is very, very wide so the amount of time I have for one bit is very small and it is also not a portfolio that coheres very well, so that I could have a managers team briefing – I mean I do try to have these things, but they’re sort of semi meaningless almost. What I try to do is to give the services that report to me, a strong sense of strategic direction and priorities i.e. a framework within which they can actually perform. I mean sometimes it might be a bit testing the one I give them, i.e. we’ve got to do X, Y and Z and we’ve all got to be doing it by Christmas sort of thing, and I expect some sort of dialogue about that within that framework and if we agree it – and I do give people an awful lot of rope to hang themselves with if you like. I mean I don’t really want to be right on top of it and have my hands on every single issue – I kind of expect people to co-operate and work with each other and have dialogue to get resolutions to issues. (EMG1)

…not as well as I should! I obviously conduct their staff review and development reviews, but only one to date, so I’ve picked up Professor Trelawney’s legacy if you like. I have also interviewed each of them once, but that’s quite difficult when you didn’t set the targets the previous year. How do I monitor their performance? – I don’t really have a clear framework for doing so and I think that has been identified as an issue. In a sense, there are a range of performance indicators that we could take and we’ve started to talk about that. If you were looking at what the success factors within schools would be, certainly you’d be looking at recruitment of students to target – core business – are you getting the students in? - and making sure you are not losing them. (EMG2)

Well, I have regular team meetings on a fortnightly basis and one-to-ones on a weekly basis - you might think that’s overkill - and therefore, we at regular intervals, look at not only the objectives, but how things are developing within their areas, to have this sort of personal and caring contact to show you are interested in what they do and value what they do. It’s not only about measuring performance, which I do through my regular chats and looking at the objectives at certain intervals, but it’s really about trying to value the person as well as in terms of what they do, and trying to get that message across to them – it’s important that we praise staff more than being negative towards them. I try to do this in as jocular way as I can and try to get the message across not only in a formal way but in an informal way. Yes, team meetings, one-to-one meetings, regularly revisit the staff review and development objectives and documentation at least on a termly basis – lots of contact. (EMG3)

I guess that I do that through that sort of target setting process so that we’ll agree that we are looking in a particular year to achieve a number of targets - and I guess that is the whole pro-point of having a strategic plan in research
and enterprise - and we moved a couple of years ago to be able to begin to set targets. So we'll have the strategic plan as it were, the vision, the objectives and we'll break that down into a series of targets and look at how those can be delivered. So for me, that is the kind of bread and butter and the important thing is kind of owning those targets so that if you have a strategic plan, like for learning and teaching, it's owned through those boards and through the school channels. Because I think that's where we were five years ago, we had kind of targets but they were simply targets that were agreed and there was no kind of discussion and we kept missing those targets. Now we're getting better, but we're still not there, but we're better! And it's a kind of a balance between ownership and encouraging people to engage and embrace those targets and I guess a critical part of that is to have some kind of reward incentive scheme. I don't mean necessarily financial reward – it's not always about financial reward, I mean if you are looking at targets say research - what I am constantly hearing from staff is that their teaching timetable is full and that although they'd love to engage in research activity they just can't free up the time - one kind of incentive might be to say to those staff, well look, what we can do is free up some of your time. So that's an incentive because I think you've got to incentivise staff and we've just introduced a scheme to do that – the UL Research Incentive - and so I think it's about holistic thinking. You can enhance performance by engaging – hopefully - all staff – although you would never do that! – but by engaging maximum numbers of staff – and you have to make that kind of engagement fulfilling and rewarding and I know I am reminded constantly about performance and targets, but I don't believe you can ever meet performance and targets unless you have engaged, committed and happy staff and you could say that's probably a bit sort of cloud cuckoo land but you can at least strive for that. (EMG4)
MEASURING UP

What do you measure your performance against (benchmarking)?
How do you know you are good?

You’d be looking at a series of indicators, and I’ve actually started looking at some Australian Universities who have these indicators, and the indicators are around recruitment, retention and outcomes of students. Obviously the other thing I do is to keep an eye on the quality of provision either from external assessment such as Estyn or QAA. And I read all the external examiners reports so that I’m keeping an eye on it, and if I identify any issues then I will call in a Head of School and the Director of Learning and Teaching to talk to them about it and construct an action plan with them, so I suppose it’s not a once a year review. (EMG2)

It’s very difficult as it’s about the achievement of performance objectives that are particular – unique is the wrong word – but are particular to those particular personages and that benefit the organisation, benefit UL - so there aren’t particular benchmarks that I can really use in that sense. I mean there are benchmarks for instance in terms of Libraries and Information Services – for example numbers of people accessing the service. All the units I manage will have to produce annual reports on what they have achieved and how they have performed against their targets, and these reports will be for the whole of UL, but also for their own development. If you take the Welsh Language Unit for example, Welsh Language schemes will be completely different in different universities – there will be a set of core things, but if you take [University A and University B] they are bilingual so benchmarking isn’t really feasible. If we were a business it would be different in that sort of sense. There are some overall university benchmarks like recruitment and retention rates which we can and do use, but for the areas I manage it is more difficult. Having said that, there are so many people and variables affecting the number of students we recruit – it isn’t simply down to the recruitment and admissions unit, it’s down to schools and a myriad of other people. So we use them when they are appropriate. (EMG3)

For example, in KTPs, we will look at say the top five per cent of universities in the UK – not just in Wales – and we will say OK these are the top five per cent of universities, this is where we need to be, and through that sort of targeting and sort of benchmarking I guess that has got us to pretty much the number one position in Wales, and in the top three per cent in the UK. Likewise, one of the major knowledge transfer activities in Wales is where monies are made available for universities to work with businesses and we benchmark against all other universities in Wales and through that kind of benchmarking we’ve just pipped X University to take the lead in Wales. So yes, we are constantly looking at benchmarking and we did the same with the RAE and that kind of influenced the strategic thinking at the last RAE, where we went from entering eight or nine units for assessment with 40% of staff, to four units for assessment with 25% of staff, and that has sort of moved us up 20 places in the league table in RAE terms and in monetary terms it’s moved us from just under half a
million to £1.2 million – so that's a case of benchmarking which has a real sort of impact. So benchmarking and measuring outcomes has been a sort of realistic but challenging target. But it’s critical – I mean how can you set targets without being knowledgeable and intelligent about what’s happening locally, regionally, nationally, internationally? – you can’t. (EMG4)

No response from EMG1
MEASURING AND MANAGING INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE

How do you currently measure and manage performance at an individual level?

You could also take things like student complaints, HR issues - like the number of grievances, those kinds of factors. You’ve also got to look at financial management and resource management – have they under-spent? Have they come in on budget? Are they managing their staff effectively? But that isn’t explicit in any kind of framework and so those are my reference points if you like. So it’s quite difficult to say “You’re not doing this very well”, “I asked you for this three weeks ago where is it?” or “Why have you under recruited – I want an action plan”. It isn’t a one off or couple of times a year thing, it’s regular monitoring – but how explicit the criteria are or agreed within that particular group is, I think, an issue. I think it would be useful to do that piece of work so that if you’ve got a new Head of School say, in the new structure, you could say at the end of the year we will assess you against evidence. I mean we can collect student complaints and collate external reports – there is real evidence around that would underpin this framework. I do carry out one-to-ones with the Heads of School on a twice termly basis and that’s an opportunity to address some of those issues and I also have to make them aware if the governing body is not satisfied with their performance, but I don’t know how comfortable I would actually feel about having a file of evidence to deal with under performance! (EMG2)

Team meetings, one-to-one meetings, regularly revisit the staff review and development objectives and documentation at least on a termly basis – lots of contact. (EMG3)

Well, on an individual basis! I’m very much a team player – of course you can talk about individuals, but for me I always sort of think about my team and how best to get the most out of the team and how best to get individual team members challenged and motivated, so we go through a kind of team process – we meet to talk about where we are in terms of targets and then I will kind of talk to individuals, and with individuals within the team we will look at different aspects of the overall strategy, or overall requirements of say the R&E Unit and likewise PDR. So I will kind of meet a very large group of individuals in PDR on a kind of monthly basis, where we look at how we are performing in terms of our research targets, how we are performing in terms of our commercial design, how we are performing in terms of our commercial work in the workshops, how we are performing in terms of our requirements with health and safety. So it’s that kind of approach and then I’ll kind of talk to individuals about their individual performance, but what I find effective – and I guess this is kind of personal – is the kind of sharing of those kinds of individuals targets so that if there are problems, then those problems are kind of shared and understood by others and there might be opportunities for other individuals in the team to say well actually, have you thought about doing it this way? Or even to say well actually,
I can help you here or I can pass you on this kind of lead or this contact. (EMG4)

No response (EMG1)
MANAGING UNDER PERFORMANCE

How do you manage underperformance – what tends to happen?

I would have a dialogue with them. In my case it would be a manager. I try very hard not to undermine the managers I’ve got so for example I wouldn’t like to think that I’d done anything with you or A Another in HR that would undermine Karkaroff’s capacity to manage the performance of his team. So my immediate port of call would be with the manager if for example I saw a performance issue within that team. If it was with that manager themselves then I would be having a dialogue with them and saying the paper works not coming or the papers have got errors in them or what ever issue around which I think there is a performance problem and if it was quite a serious performance issue I would be setting quite near deadlines. I mean with one of my service areas I am now on two weekly performance objectives with somebody where as normally I would set them in a year and give people quite a lot of scope and hope that they would find a way with prioritising them. But as you know with this particular person I’m having to do it fortnightly because things have gone wrong there and this person has lost their confidence in their own ability to manage the great mass of things that are landed on them every day of the week. We try to agree performance objectives through the staff review and development scheme so that it is set down in writing so we can at the end of the year say well how did you do with that one – as part of instigating a review. So I do think the staff review and development scheme is quite important to that but I don’t see it as a be all and end all because in the case where you have a performance issue and you’re having to meet with someone on a fortnightly basis, to leave it until the year end is just a nightmare – it’s silly. I’m not a great fan of the capability procedure – I’ve used it in my previous employment and it’s too fraught with ‘you didn’t give me enough development’ or ‘you didn’t support me properly at the right time’ - it’s too capable of saying it’s someone else’s fault! People can wriggle out of it because organisations are very imperfect. I mean if I say to someone, I want this done in two weeks and then Professor Dumbledore comes along and gives this person something else to do, it’s very easy in a capability hearing for a person to say yeah well you gave me this to do but the Professor Dumbledore gave me some other work – and you didn’t know anything about it and then you’re in a right mess. It isn’t always easy to know what the right training is to give somebody – often there’s a trail of organisational history and culture impacting on the situation and I can even have the view where I think it’s actually not their fault. So I do think the capability procedure is very difficult unless you’ve got something that glaringly obvious like somebody burning the chips in the kitchen every single day of the week – but with a lot of work that we do which is administration and management it’s much more difficult unless somebody makes an obvious mistake, I mean you and I know about one where somebody made a very, very obvious mistake which cost the organisation a lot of money – I’d go down the disciplinary route, I wouldn’t hesitate. (EMG1)
Well if you take just the last few weeks, obviously I've had to write to two or three of them and call them in and ask for further details on recruitment because some of them have not performed. The other way to deal with it, at the Heads of Schools meeting this week I asked each of them to go through their figures in front of the others and one of them actually said “Why are you doing this, you've had a detailed action plan from me?” and I said well I'm doing it because we want to disseminate best practice – what is working, the places it is working and why it is working – it's no good saying School of Education and School of Health and Social Sciences have done OK so they need not take part in the discussion – why have they done OK? So I deal with it on an individual basis but sometimes I deal with it on a group dynamic basis where by you are using – not conflict – but where they are measuring their performance against others performance within their peer group – I think that’s quite a useful thing. Sometimes – I think only once in the last year – I’ve had to call in a Head of School to have a discussion about their professional behaviour – use of language, public image of their school – something that’s quite difficult. So I think it's about using a range of mechanisms – there's the staff review and development interview but I don't think our Staff Review and Development Scheme focuses on under performance – it focuses on the positives, the opportunities and on the achievements which is good and fine and that motivates some people very well and moves them forward, but I think we need to look at a mechanism for getting at those under performance issues more explicitly. (EMG2)

Firstly I would monitor the situation far more closely; I haven’t had it since I’ve been here, but certainly in the faculty in the education department. But what you do is monitor, you involve colleagues and you help. So monitoring on a more regular basis, involving colleagues and being open with that person in terms of what you perceive to be problem areas that they have and then you would have to look at staff development and look at various ways of resolving it you know? But I suppose there were one or two cases years ago, but at the end of the day....unfortunately in an organisation like this for instance....umm it’s different here because you're measuring a different type of performance to what I've measured previously you know – you are looking here more at management, because most of my people will manage other people and see how they are performing, but in terms of now, you know if there are problems, I will get to know about problems in terms of the people I manage by other people, you know, reporting to me, saying to me well you know, there’s a problem here, they didn't perform or we didn't get this information on time etc. and you have to address those – inevitably there’s no escaping from those, and you have to mention to those about how they are going to address the issues. I’ve been involved in – unfortunately – getting rid of people because of...I mean this was years and years ago – but not so much happens in support units as I would call them. And also it’s very easy in this sense to help. You know if you have new people coming in for instance Collaboration and Partnership and Welsh Language......now Professor Moody is an old codger at it and old hat you know but in obvious terms of liP that was never going to be easy for him at all. I mean I went to the meetings to make sure he got his people on board – I
was surprised they got it when they did because there was a lot of dissatisfaction within the area, not so much on reflecting on Moody’s management but because of their perception of the organisation and their place within that organisation and he had to work on that in other words to underpin this is the caring bit and how valuable they were to the organisation and becoming more valuable because of the concept of learning centres etc. in the future. So the good in it for him was to underpin how valuable they were in the organisation and to get a self-worth for them and I think in a sense, talk to people when they don’t achieve things, if they don’t have the self-confidence or self-worth then you’ve got to work on that very often. But that’s not an easy one, that’s a more difficult one. But you have to address it at the end of the day. What happens in organisations like this, in education very often is that things or people are often sidelined or pushed sideways and the issues aren’t really addressed. I’m not saying whether that’s a good or bad thing because you know you are dealing with people’s lives and their futures and for them to know there is some sort of package that will help them. (EMG3)

I would deal with it on a one to one basis with HR - and we’ve done it – that’s the thing, I’m as hard-nosed about under performance as anyone else and I kind of manage that – I can’t afford not to. I mean I’m expected to generate certain levels of income so if there is under-performance…… In a way – and I guess that’s the way I operate – but I can kind of pick up under performance very quickly because of the kind of infrastructure we have in place. I guess because I’m very much kind of hands on – or try to be, you know. People would argue about how successful I am in my team about my hands on but I’m still there on a weekly basis and on a daily basis if people need me, so I can kind of scan the landscape and see under performance very quickly because we’re transparent. So if there’s a kind of problem in an area – because we are actually measuring performance on a monthly basis and even on a weekly basis. The times I’ve had to deal with under performance have not been too many and I would like to think that’s not a coincidence, so you know, I am very much in touch and I am very approachable. People know that they can come and talk to me, so if there is a problem….I mean I’m busy, but will always make time to sit down, always find time to manage it. I mean that’s key to me, so I hope what we have is that we will have built up a kind of mutual respect amongst the team. So for me, performance is sort of key because we sort of measure it agonisingly. But then that is kind of counter to job satisfaction. I mean I got kind of upset the other day (this is being wiped out afterwards isn’t it?). I got upset earlier in the week when somebody suggested there was an issue of morale in one little type of team within my domain and that was nine o’clock in the morning and by five past nine I’d kind of shifted a couple of things that I needed to do so that I could go and talk to that team. And I had three kinds of meetings with them as a result of that – and it wasn’t an issue of morale in the end, it was more about sort of operational issues. But it had been presented as that to me kind of third hand by somebody completely removed from that. But I mean even a kind of sniff of that…..but I mean that the way I kind of operate and I can’t imagine operating any other way. (EMG4).
RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

In terms of recruitment, how do you ensure that you get the best candidates rather than the second best?

Well you know, since I’ve been in UL I’ve been on hardly any recruitment panels – I think I can count on one hand in three years and I actually haven’t actually recruited any of my managers, say from an outside pool yeah? I mean they’re all what I inherited – so I don’t know if you’re asking me that question in the context of the experiences that I’ve had in UL, but I think that it’s very important to get the specification of what you want right up front and err you know assess people against that specification fairly and honestly that what I would do as a pre-requisite but a lot of judgement is involved with interview panels about people. (EMG1)

Well certainly, we put care and consideration into the person specs, job descriptions and criteria upon which we’re going to measure people. I don’t know if we always kind of advertise at the most appropriate time and opportune moment to select and I think that, to some extent, impairs our ability to recruit. I think one of the things is to offer flexible opportunities like secondments and other models yeah? To think outside of the box, so if you know that there is somebody who might have the skills that you want but that they wouldn’t be interested in this, that or the other then you’ve got to think flexibly haven’t you? and get their skills in a flexible way. (EMG2)

Well again it’s a sense of reality really – you’ve got to realise what the organisation is, what its place is in the perception of…. If you’re talking specifically about UL and what its reputation is in the wider…but more so, as far as I see it there are support staff and academic staff and we work on reputation in a sense so you have to be realistic in terms of it being down to other people’s perceptions. You must inevitably (it’s the obviously simplistic one) you must get the best candidate that you can but you have to realise at the end of the day that the fellow that you attract has a perception of the organisation. In most cases, lots of the jobs – lots of the support staff here would come because they don’t have a perception of the organisation like the academic going somewhere to enhance their own professional status. So I think you know, there are a number of facets here. In the professional….in the academic world I think very clearly that we are curtailed by our academic reputation, but in terms of support staff I see nothing preventing one from going for the highest one depending on the job that you do. So yes, you have to aim as high as you can and place yourself in the market place – you know the impression they have of UL and I think in very many cases UL has a very good reputation out there now in terms of certain academic areas – not all - and certainly as far as support staff are concerned you know yeah, you have to have an appropriate recruitment system, you have an HR system I place which has criteria to enable people like myself and others to evaluate the applications, the recruitment process and that’s important. If you simple don’t do it from…you have to have criteria, you
do have to have other measures in place with HR systems – it isn’t simply letting people get on with it. (EMG3)

I kind of agonise over recruitment. I mean basically if we’re recruiting, I’m involved in all recruitment areas. First of all, we look at the requirement of the post – what we are actually asking the individual to deliver – so that’s the starting point and we will then look at what kind of individual do we need that can meet those requirements – and I’ve got a fair degree of success in this because I’ve put together a couple of fairly successful teams. But also, two years ago, we won a contract to develop and deliver a manufacturing advisory service for Wales (a two million pound contract) and I kind of looked at what was required to deliver this service and it was clear to me that if we were going to be successful – and I’d looked around the country to see what was happening elsewhere – and elsewhere there were a lot of theoretical things going on but it was clear that what was needed were individuals with practical hands on experience, so I said to me what am I requiring from individuals, so we got underway with that process and we were three months into the contract and I was kind of struggling to recruit the individuals – we went out to advert a couple of times – and I refused to appoint and the WDA were saying to me well you’ve taken on this contract and yet you haven’t got the personnel on board to deliver. And I held my ground and said I’m not going to deliver rubbish and eventually we got to a position where we did recruit excellent individuals with a combination of sort of head hunting and now we’re held up as an example of best practice in the UK. MAS Wales is an example of how the service should be operating and other regions of the UK are pointed towards us to look at what we are doing. So I think it is absolutely about having a crystal clear understanding of what you are expecting an individual to do and deliver – what are the deliverables – and then from those deliverables, working back to the kinds of experience and skills sets the individual needs and being absolutely sort of ruthless. If there’s uncertainty or sort of “greyness” in that individual’s ability to deliver against the requirement, then reject. (EMG4)
RECRUITMENT & SELECTION IMPROVEMENTS

Are there any parts of the recruitment process you think should be improved and, if so, what and how?

Well definitely, I mean I really, really dislike this procedure that we have in UL of not having interviews and presentations. I mean to me it just goes against the grain of anything I understand about recruitment. I have found that difficult that some people just submit a CV and some people just look around the table and see if they like the CV or not. I mean I do think it’s astounding really and I don’t know how to shift it because as you know it’s driven by the vice-chancellor….and the few panels I have been to have been of that kind – I just don’t like that at all really. (EMG1)

I think in my field I would like to constitute some processes like presentations throughout the organisation. I mean in Teaching and Learning that’s very important. I don’t know if that’s the case so you end up sometimes with people who perhaps on paper and in a formal interview situation can excel but they can not actually do the job you are asking them to do, so I think it’s quite useful to have their presentation style tested. (EMG2)

I think – and this is going to seem very strange – there is the informal and formal bit. I think on the formal side, I think we have procedures in place now where there is a fairness and openness – I think we are getting there – we’re not there. In terms of the way that we monitor through and evaluate and have standardisation across the courses which is good but I would perhaps want a greater emphasis on the informal bit – it’s very difficult because it’s all false – people will be at their best because they want the job but informal processes are inclined to other measures you know, how people are regarded and simply relying on the formal process – there are other ways you could be doing it. It could be costly in the sense that you’d have to put in place – I don’t know - models in place where one in a social context, there are various ways, I mean I’ve been on one where I spent three days being analysed and all sorts of things done to you and I’ve been part of that process and at the end of it I’ve been lucky, but I didn’t get a job. But you’ve got to be careful as well. There is no perfect recruitment process. People would argue that the interview process – however that is defined – is also imperfect but the best of a bad bunch. But I think trying to get some informal systems in place. I don’t think a straight interview does it to be quite honest, as a process of being fair and open and everything else. I mean we do have presentations, but going around getting other peoples impressions of people is very important and that can be done in different ways – I’ve talked about nothing really but….. (EMG3)

Clearly we have our personnel systems and processes in place, and we have our job descriptions and person specifications in place and that’s excellent. But I do wonder how we are sort of cross-referencing to the wider UL picture – it’s almost like case law, something has been done for a period of time this way and so a job comes up, that’s the job description. And I don’t think we cross
reference often enough, because other organisations and all universities are dealing with change – and that will always be the case – and there are kind of internal and external factors, and I don’t think we review those requirements often enough and I’m not sure we sort of benchmark those requirements against the requirements of individuals. And I’ve seen cases where – (and I’m sure you have) – where individuals have been put into positions which are not really appropriate. They might be incredibly able individuals, but actually when you look at their sort of skills sets, their kind of experience, their qualifications, there is actually a mis-match to what we are requiring. They’ve been taken on because they are excellent kind of individuals, sound individuals, but actually they don’t fit in the role – but I think that whole kind of process…… but how you do that, I don’t know because that’s almost a cultural shift and at the end of the day it’s got to be down to the individual school or unit. And I think that it’s either due to a lack of experience or perhaps not fully understanding that sort of precise evaluation at the front end. And I’m not sure how you do it – I know how I do it, but I’m not sure how transferable that is without an awful lot of management development, and that critical. I think this whole issue of recruitment and retention and development is up to the organisation, because we can have our academic aspirations or we can have our financial aspirations, but unless you’ve got individuals at all levels who can achieve that – and are signed up to that and kind of own that, and own that kind of “corporate thinking”…..and that’s the other thing, corporate thinking and corporate ownership. (EMG4)
INDUCTION

Can you describe the Induction processes you currently have in place to ensure that new members of staff are fully aware of your own and UL’s expectations in terms of performance?

Well the only one I’ve had lately was this Fleur down in Colin Creevey’s office and what we did was, I had a meeting with her and Colin straight away – I don’t know if it was day one or day two but it was very early on and I spent really, on and off, the whole morning with her talking about the work, talking about committee servicing, talking about how the different committees work, what the conventions were – in that case it was also about the politics of committees and why some committees were more politically sensitive than other and the need for confidentiality and what we were trying to do to develop the service. What sort of development things there were and how that persons skills would fit into our development agenda. So for example if we were trying to get all the minutes up on the web, so we were looking for somebody who was going to…. I mean after that of course it certainly isn’t directly in my line is it? So I mean I help Colin to make sure that that person has got an induction programme in place and you know they did get a chance to go to committees and that they did meet the right people etc. and I think that that probably worked quite well – except that she then left! (EMG1)

Viktor does a very good job! I think we have got fairly thorough processes in LTSU – I mean very, very thorough, for example we had a day probably about a month ago, where I spent virtually a whole day down at Doric Avenue Campus inducting the new Directors of Learning and Teaching into their role and that was quite structured in the sense of talking through what the objectives were and the operational plan and strategic plan and so I think fairly good induction procedures at a local level – and he does make sure that we comply with all of these things!…..and Rita Skeeter as a more experienced member was involved in mentoring some of the newer ones, so it’s sort of formal and informal and we have regular chats about how they’re getting on and sort of mentoring. What we need to do is be much clearer about what their functions and roles are and that’s part of the reasoning behind the new re-structuring because the diversity that exists within what we thought was a fairly tight job description is huge, so that’s something that we have to do. I mean induction of students obviously as well. The Charter Mark manual defines what should be in the students’ induction, so I wrote to all the DLTs – so a little bit of ‘policing’ to make sure people are properly inducted. (EMG2)

Well I mean we used to, I’d have to go back to an experience here, because I mean, I deal with individuals here and I mean it’s for me to be alongside them in a sense. It’s happened for instance again with collaboration and partnership and franchise and I’ve had to be along side them mentoring them and doing it with them and that also applied very much with the Welsh Language Unit and that’s the way I’ve sort of done it – I mean the mentorship has had to be me but it has to be mentorship and all I can do then is to ensure that they have
managerial procedures in place and to ensure that new staff they have within their units are mentored, are looked after and I emphasise that in the staff development and appraisal. The way that I actually engage with them is the way that I would expect them to engage with their staff and I think that’s important in terms of mentorship. Anyway, going back to lecturing staff, whenever we appointed lecturing staff in the old faculty and in the department we made sure they had a mentor and another lecturer with them for at least six months and they produced reports – it’s obvious stuff – but I think we were quite before our time in Ionic Campus in doing things like that. Mentorship is critical I think and not only in terms of the academic but also on the counselling side, the pastoral side where they need somebody – it could well be the same mentor, but if it’s not or they can’t relate to that person they need another……so mentorship is a requirement not a – what’s the word I’m looking for?….an add on. (EMG3)

Personally now, and I can’t speak for anyone else, but we take induction very seriously and any new member of staff who comes in, one of the senior managers will spend a whole day introducing them to other members of staff, kind of walking them round. We spend an awful lot of time…we’ll take them through the kind of philosophy and objectives of PDR, where it’s kind of positioned, who its stakeholders are, where it sits kind of locally, regionally, nationally, internationally, where its priorities are. I mean, even if we took someone on in the commercial section we would induct that person into the work of research into cancer because we’ve taken a sort of holistic and integrated approach, so we’d take them right through that and we’ll also go through what that individual is expecting to do and what that is likely to involve and then we’ll kind of work with that individual fairly closely – you know on a kind of daily basis in the early stages, and then onto a weekly basis and then a monthly basis until that individual feels absolutely confident and comfortable with what’s required. And then there’s a kind of “open door” for that individual if they want to come up to us, and then at the end of a three or four month period we see how that individual is getting on. (EMG4)
INDUCTION IMPROVEMENTS

Are there any parts of the Induction process you think should be improved and, if so, what and how?

I am in favour of having a face to face induction programme. I mean there is a place of e-learning in the staff development sphere and it may well be that within induction there is some role for e-learning, but I am in favour of the face to face thing and what ever it is, I think it matters less what they get on it than the fact that they get it – you know, that they think they are being treated as important that they meet people, that they are told things and given information and it is an expectation of staff when they are new to an organisation that they will have some kind of formal corporate level induction and that it will focus on such things as how the organisation is structured, how you find your way through it, who you go to, what the basics of health safety and emergency are, yeah? Or and I think it’s very high level stuff and it has to be face to face. There have to be some faces there for them to see. And it has to be away from the office so that they feel special – it’s a bit like getting baptised – they’ve got to have done it because you know, the worst thing people can say is well you know I went there and they didn’t even give me an induction programme – you know? I was just thrown right in you know? Because throughout my career, that’s what has happened to me. That is what has happened throughout my career and I can remember one job that I had – it was a faculty registrar – and I went in and it was a Friday and the first of the month when I started, and I went in and when I got there the assistant registrar had gone off sick and there was a faculty board that morning and I was just given the papers and they said ‘here’s the faculty board, Cho’s off sick this morning’ and that is typically what I’ve experienced – there’s been no induction, there’s not even been a meeting with the boss to say welcome, you know, this is how we do it here – look forward to seeing you – none of it – absolutely none of it! (EMG1)

Certainly from my perspective I think we need an induction programme for programme directors. I mean I dealt with one yesterday where a new course director had done things – he’d changed the programme – I mean he’d actually moved to a new credit framework all at sort of course committee level and I had to kind of tactfully say, look you know you’re not allowed to do that! And you know, he’d already told students…and you can’t lay into him hard because you think well, - and it’s the schools to a certain extent that should be inducting their new course directors – but I don’t think they are. And then I had an example in the summer of a course director who had applied extra regulations which could have caused UL a major problem, so I think course directors or programme directors induction is probably one of the key areas. (EMG2)

I would formalise the mentoring process without question. I would also realise that the mentoring processes vary across the piste inevitably and that mentorships would have to be different for academic and support staff – perhaps, I don’t know, mentorship periods would have to be different lengths,
but mentorship is not simply about doing the job as it were it’s about counselling, it’s about pastoral support. (EMG3)

No response (EMG4)
PROBATION

How do you currently ensure that staff meet their probationary requirements?

Well through this induction route but I’ve had very few Allison you know – I mean I’ve had hardly any in fact. In fact the only one I’ve had since I’ve been here is Moaning Myrtle and what I did with Myrtle – but again she wasn’t directly in my line, she’s in Professor Dumbledore’s line, but he obviously wasn’t going to – wasn’t well placed to do it you know. I mean I did have a meeting with her at the point of which probation was confirmed onto the permanent staff and I made a recommendation. (EMG1)

Well I’m not that involved, but certainly with Heads of Schools we want them to tighten that all up and link it with the HE Academy requirements is the answer. I’m aware that that’s loose – very loose. But I think with teaching staff it’s got to be linked to this framework we’re talking about and with mentoring and teaching and learning experience, because we’ve got staff – I mean I was dealing with a personnel case last summer with someone whose been teaching in UL for ten years where the school has to give him work where he can’t do damage – that’s frightening. That person’s never been told - or not never been told, never been exposed to a discussion about the evidence – so I think we do need to tighten up on that, we definitely do. (EMG2)

Well I don’t, to be perfectly honest – at this moment I don’t have anyone on probation. What we do have is the forms that we have from HR and I think I filled one in on young Madame Maxime – well, I don’t know whether I have! – but yeah, I’m aware that we do have procedures and I am reminded by HR that I have to fill in a form and I presume a probationary review here, but I can’t say I’m particularly au fait with it in the sense that I will make a report when I am required to do so about their performance, because you know, if you don’t satisfy certain objectives or what ever the word is, by a certain period then they can of course be completely ignored. I think that it’s important for all parties I think that’s what I would emphasise, that the probationary period mustn’t be seen as simply for the employer but should be seen as a very positive by the employee. And although they might not like it, at the end of a period it would be far better for them to move on rather than stay in an organisation. I don’t think that is particularly clear to them – the probationary period they see as a – what’s the word I’m looking for? – a test of their competence in areas etc. – which it should. It should really be as to whether they are fitted for the job and in a sense whether the organisation suits them. In both things. Why not? But at the moment all I do is adhere to what I’m told. (EMG3)

We use the formal probation process. Like last year we recruited a couple of individuals to promote KTPs and even now, I will kind of go and sit with them to make sure they are OK and work closely with them. So even after that sort of induction process, ensuring they’ve kind of understood the marketing needs, the proposal writing requirements – and they’ll still sort of bounce things off us. I
mean induction is over a long period – it’s a long kind of process. I mean there are a few individuals who don’t need a long sort of induction, but for new staff who are new to the organisation, it’s kind of ongoing, it’s that kind of informal thing, but again, that’s part of the culture isn’t it? So I can’t distinguish induction from the sort of caring and ensuring that an individual is fitting in, that they are comfortable and working OK with colleagues and that there’s no sort of friction about. (EMG4)
PROBATION IMPROVEMENTS

Are there any parts of the probationary process you think should be improved and, if so, what and how?

I think what people put in place for induction must be seen as part of probation, so it must be part of probation that you’ve been on a corporate induction, it must be part of probation that your line manager has given you a probationary schedule with some things that you’ve got to have achieved you know within six months, yeah? And it may be very simple you know, stuff you’ve got to have done in the first year – that you’ve got to have made contact with all the senior managers or something like that, umm, that you’ve got to have become familiar with UL’s this, that and the other, that you must have read the strategic plan or whatever it is that you want to say to somebody that they must have done in order to be reasonably competent in their job yeah? So for me induction and probation must be tied together and it must be formal i.e. there must be a form signed off to show that this person started work today, this is their induction schedule. The review will be at the end of one month, at the end of three months and the confirmation at the end of six months. (EMG1).

How would you improve it? I suppose understanding the administrative processes and procedures and how that is done – I mean there is not always clarity around forms and protocols and so forth. (EMG2)

Yes. I don’t know quite how to articulate it or sum it up, but we have the kind of formal Induction but then there’s much more. I think it’s the bit around that formal induction and kind of probation and again, it’s kind of down to individual schools and departments – I mean it’s so variable and it would be great if we could have some kind of standard – and that’s impossible – I mean how can you have a kind of standard on induction? I mean even if we could be sharing best practice in some of the things. OK I’ll be told there’s a formal Induction process in place and that’s it, but for me it’s much more than that, but then how can you extend that?... OK you’ve got the kind of induction, you’ve got the kind of probation period – I’m just thinking back to my kind of experiences – I think it was pretty good by and large, but I think we should look at the induction process and the probationary process as well. I’m in favour of extending the probationary period. I mean one of my first university jobs was on a three year probationary period and that was where you had a mentor – you were assigned a mentor to work kind of along side you. And that would be something very good if we could introduce it – whether you could find the individuals who are interested and of sufficient calibre will remain to be seen!! But I think it is about that personal contact at the end of the day and it’s about making individuals feel that they do have that kind of route through, if they are slightly....it’s always difficult settling into a new organisation. I mean for some it just sort of happens, but it’s down to personality and for others it’s a little more difficult and I do worry that we lose sort of able individuals along the way who are not maybe confident in going and talking to someone if they need to. I know that we have to work
within the realms of reality and practicality but I think we could do a lot more. (EMG4)
STAFF REVIEW

UL currently has in place a staff review and development scheme. How would you rate yourself in terms of this scheme being integrated with your school/department?

- Fully integrated
- Used annually but with further developments necessary
- Not used frequently enough
- Not used at all
- Other

I think it does need more development. I try to abide by the corporate deadlines for carrying out staff review with everybody and with most of my permanent managers that seems to work. This year, I’ve had to take on more managers, because I haven’t just had to take on one manager in the registry, I’ve had to take on all four of them and so that’s a bit odd. And because it’s likely not to exist on a future basis, I’m not sure quite how that’s going to work really. So I think really with Professor Lupin and Karkaroff and Mr. Crouch and Professor Flitwick we’ve got a pathway and a system whereby we agree some top level performance objectives – I have an issue with meeting every two weeks – and they have a list of things that they bring to me or I have a list of things that I bring to them – it takes about an hour and those one to ones are a just useful and sort of formal mechanism and I think it works less well with all the managers that report to me actually, oddly with Karkaroff, and I think the reason for that is because there are so many HR issues around in this organisation that I tend to see him every day of the week. And I see Mr. Crouch and Professor Flitwick much less frequently – I do quite often only see them every two weeks at the issues meeting. And Professor Lupin of course is different again because he goes into EMG so regularly and receives instructions from other quarters, but not withstanding that we do have this formal mechanism for dealing with issues. But yeah it could be, it could be, it could be improved all the time….but even so I think that the managers that report to me have difficulty getting from what we’ve talked about in terms of performance objectives to the training and development they need to do that job and that is a very under developed part of the process in my view you know. It’s very, very ad hoc and in some cases for example Professor Lupin has come from the academic end of UL umm, he obviously has an expectation of much higher external courses than people in the administration have come to expect. And I mean I think within the schools they’re out all the time on conferences and programmes. My problem with him is keeping him in! I almost don’t dare send him a flyer about a course because he thinks I’m sending him on one! I personally don’t feel optimistic of UL being able to implement an appraisal because quite a lot of the management in UL is personality driven – it’s not really driven by the business objectives, it’s you know, whose mates or who likes who or who hung around with who 66 years ago. I think that’s a difficult environment to put appraisal in. You know if we were much more driven towards the bottom line, the outcomes of UL were much more easy to measure you know, for example if we worked for L’Oreal
then say then sales would be….we’d all be saying well how much did you sell? And because we don’t have that there is just simply too much opportunity and too much actual behaviour of ‘blaming off’ on other people, so it’s not easy. I mean so often, if you’ve got a bad failure rate on a course it’s not because the teacher is poor it’s because you had bad material – do you see what I mean? It was because the students were poor, or if you have students up in arms or you didn’t recruit any students it’s because you wouldn’t take some legal action over a website or something like that I mean – it’s not a good environment to impose it (appraisal) really. So I don’t feel 100 per cent optimistic about it Allison, myself. But I think the paperwork for the performance objectives needs to be much, much clearer and I think people should have half a dozen clear performance objectives and these are not just things they are going to be doing in their job description, but these are things that where there is going to be some change in operation. (EMG1)

Well it happens in most other places – if you look at the Health Service and you look at other models – there’s certainly much more of a bite to it if you like. I mean, I’m a Governor in an FE college and I went to the governing body last week and certainly they’ve got performance-related pay there for their senior managers, so I’d be very interested to explore how they do that, how that works. They were going to run it out from their top tier if you like – their senior management team down, but they’ve never gone down which you know is interesting – so there are other models out there and it’s really difficult to get into those issues of underperformance until things get really bad and I think we need a mechanism for that. I think it may come around tighter target setting and more clear objective setting and I think the strategy development office are doing quite a lot of useful work around that so we’ll be able to…I’ll be able to measure school’s performance much more evidence based to measuring the outcomes of the schools performance against the against the corporate strategic objectives. That’s coming, it’s on it’s way and will be useful in determining which schools are meeting their objectives…..or why they are not, because it may not be relevant for everyone to contribute to everything – the typical thing about the School of Sport and widening access!...but at least you can have the debate…you are the lowest school in that respect, isn’t that strange!? (EMG2)

My experience of the staff review scheme is that I’ve always had one from when I started in 1987 in this place. I’ve always had appraisals of senior staff umm but what I’ve not done is sent an action plan down to HR, but I’ve always appraised staff, I’ve always you know felt the urge. I’ve had a very formal procedure as well in the sense that staff are aware of it, I’m aware of it and a record is kept of it. If you are going to performance manage people then there must be a way of monitoring that and if you don’t have development appraisal or some form of scheme, you’re failing yourself, you’re failing the organisation and in particular you’re failing the individual, you know? I think we should have an appraisal scheme because what we have in the staff review, evidently we do set objectives - I think in a sense those very often are not related to performance management – I do think we need another formal way particularly
in terms of managers of measuring either over and above perhaps or it could be integrated into the present scheme and then you could call it a Staff Development and Appraisal Scheme, but I think there needs to be another element in terms of performance management…..I think the problem that we have at UL is more about compliance rather than anything else and we ought to have people complying for the good of the organisation really – not so much accountable – although you could argue, what’s the difference – it’s difficult to differentiate between the two, but compliance is a problem and I think performance management can certainly help in terms of compliance. (EMG3)

I think it’s fully integrated. I mean with LiP – I don’t know if you read the conclusion or the reports for PDR and R&E? I hope it does sort of confirm a lot of what I am saying in terms of our approach, so yes I think it is fully integrated, but it is only part of it because, OK, you can kind of review, you can go through the mechanics of it every six months, but it’s the bit in between that matter and are probable even more important. (EMG4)
STAFF REVIEW IMPROVEMENTS

Are there any parts of the staff review and development process you think should be improved and, if so, what and how?

I think the scheme as it stands is fine – it’s pretty straightforward. But I do wonder about the whole business about performance, because if we’re serious about performance, and at the moment it is really about review and development and for all kinds of reasons, performance is being left to one side. And we’ve kind of sneaked in, to part of ours – I mean we fulfil the requirements of UL – but we’ve also got a sort of performance element – I’m not sure how legitimate that is! But if you take PDR, we’ve got to the position now where we are actually setting targets. We’re agreeing targets with individuals – now again, it’s a kind of balance and the individual might come back and say, well I think that’s a bit unrealistic – but at the end of the day we will kind of set those targets, pretty much in tablets of stone and we will measure performance against those – and we’re now measuring on a monthly basis against those. Now that might be overkill, but we went through a kind of difficult period about eighteen months ago when we lost six or seven key staff – I mean they were kind of head-hunted. But not only did we lose a lot of experience, we also lost a lot of pen and ink because they took that with them and we’re having to do all that again, in-house. So we’ve had to take a hard nosed stance because we lost market share and so we’re in a position now where we are monitoring a whole range of activity on a monthly basis. And we sit in this room every Monday – the management team – and talk about those targets on a weekly basis and the teams look at them on a monthly basis. So I think that’s the only way we can move forward. I mean I would have a performance management tool and measure managers’ performance within that and I would look at things with the academic re-structuring so there is a performance related element – performance related pay. Now, that is incredibly controversial. But I think in reality if you want to talk about performance and you want to talk about targets then you have got to have some kind of realistic support and infrastructure and I’m sorry, but our current staff review and development scheme doesn’t actually get us there. So, (I shouldn’t be saying this) but we do what we have to do in terms of staff review and development but we’ve also got an alternative sort of process running sort of concurrently. But the difficulty we have got is the culture, because the unions – I mean it’s been fascinating because we put forward a proposal to introduce a small element of performance related pay and the radar went straight out and there was outcry – performance related pay! Scandalous! But the way around that is to keep it in for managers, and I’m going to argue to keep that in. I mean it’s not a big deal in terms of the amount of money, but for me, it’s the principle. And if I can kind of win that one and kind of establish it, at least we’ve got a start. If we kind of lose this one and it’s kicked into touch, God knows how we get it back on the agenda. So it’s absolutely vital and I think we’ve got to have a massive kind of shift in culture, thinking and philosophy and again, it comes back to putting in a support system to change that. (EMG4)
CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND SUCCESSION PLANNING

_in terms of career development and succession planning, how do you currently identify and nurture staff as part of your succession planning?

Well again, with units I try to encourage managers to do it and to be very clear about the skills that they’ve got and who in fact could take over from whom in the event of serious illness or in the event of someone leaving. And I think it’s quite difficult because often the gap between the manager and the next person down is quite large in UL. I mean, you take the strategy development office and the difference in salary between the Head of Unit and the next person down is twice as much. You know it’s 50 grand to 25 grand, so it’s very difficult to think that a more junior person is going to be able to act up. So there aren’t really the ladders and the bridges there. One of the things that I do think is difficult is that you know, I don’t really see anybody champing at my heels for my job – and I’d feel a bit happier if there were, somebody within that team that reports to me who was seeking to develop the range of skills that I’ve got, so that if I just disappear they could step in. Because at the moment I just don’t see anybody who could effectively do that yeah? I mean I think there would be a gap but that’s for Professor Dumbledore to address, not me if I should leave or have a serious illness or whatever, I think it would all have to become deeply disaggregated. (EMG1)

With difficulty I think! I mean I’ve certainly for example this week had a meeting with Ludo Bagman and Cornelius Fudge about the succession planning for the MBA because the member of staff is about to come to retirement age and you know, it’s a very valuable programme to UL, so I’ve asked for a formal succession plan that will go to EMG. I suppose also, you try to expose people to a range of experiences – if you take Viktor for example, he hasn’t taught – he’d done Teaching of English as a Foreign Language in Rome or something, so I taught with him on the MA Ed programme and kind of coached him into the role and got him involved with assessment and then the following year gave him more responsibility and so forth in preparation probably to contribute to the CPD framework that we are creating – I mean a lot of planning has gone into that. With Rita Skeeter, it’s to do with getting the corporate perspective and talking to them about, if you like, getting out of the local box that they’re in and giving them experiences that will enable them to develop a more corporate perspective, so I know where the opportunities are to develop people, and what they need, and I’m trying to do that. And I suppose with Madame Pomfrey, giving her the opportunity to get into the kinds of environments and contexts where she’s going to bring things back to the institution and for herself. So I suppose in a range of ways, I wouldn’t say formal courses. (EMG2)

Well I indeed – I mean I think it’s critical in a sense the only way you can identify them here at UL and engage with them about your feelings about the way they need to develop themselves in terms of their careers. I also try to engage with them in terms of all the courses that you feel they should be going on, the networking that they should be doing, then when they’re ready to move on, the
job applications. Succession planning is very important when you feel it appropriate, but it doesn’t apply to everybody – but I’ve got a couple of young men that it very much applies to and a young lady that it applies to and I give them advice about their potential development and what they should be doing – particularly about networking etc, etc. which I think is very important. (EMG3)

We’ve had to manage it because of our previous situation. It used to be the case that a couple of individuals owned the management of a part of the organisation – no longer the case! That is now devolved much deeper into the organisation, so we are now in a position, for example with my own kind of line management, there is no longer a single individual that is the ‘font of knowledge’. That is now shared. So we’ve moved the ownership of issues much deeper into the organisation – so if there is one individual in a key role, there are at least two other individuals in the organisation that understand the key issues, sit in on meetings and kind of own that – and it’s actually worked, because we’ve had a key individual loss for two months now and we’ve not reached a critical position out there because we’ve put that kind of succession planning in place, the individuals directly below that individual are now sitting in and we’ve done that consciously and transparently, so people know why. And the positives from that are that individuals can often see the space for career progression – ‘cos I think it’s important and have always believed this – I would always much prefer to “grow” in-house the kind of expertise we need to move up, rather than buy in, because you’ve got the understanding, you’ve got the kind of loyalty – all those things. So we are now – and quite successfully – growing our own kind of future managers in-house. (EMG4)
IMPROVEMENTS WITH SUCESSION PLANNING

Are there any parts of the succession planning process you think should be improved and, if so, what and how?

I mean it’s horses for courses obviously, really, I mean on the academic front it would be things that are enabling academics who have some capability to shine in management, to shine. And I think we don’t have that because the gap between the Head of School and the next one down is a senior lecturer, so we don’t have the sort of principal lecturers that are given the corporate wide role etc. to the extent that we have them, they’re off on some academic thing or other and their not doing the corporate management. And on the administration front, I mean there clearly is a lot of work to do to encourage line managers to encourage the staff beneath them as it were – if you can talk about it in that way! – to be placed in more situations where they can do presentations and kind of be seen to hone and develop their skills you know, being able to contribute in the managerial sphere which is nearly always quite corporate and we don’t have it I don’t think. (EMG1)
REWARDING PERFORMANCE

What are your views on rewarding good performance?

I’m not really in favour of performance related pay at all – it’s highly divisive, highly subjective. In my experience it’s usually money for the boys and I think there are huge gender differences in the ways that people’s contribution is evaluated. My experience of life is that men typically get much higher rewards for much, much less contribution and their mistakes are more often overlooked and furthermore, I think that what happens is that men avoid difficult jobs where they are more likely to fail. They try to push that work towards the women, so I’m not in favour of performance related pay because I don’t think it’s kosher. I think staff like to be valued, you know, it’s got very little to do with money. I think they want to know that they are doing a good job, that they can be trusted to do a good job, that they are seen, that they are accepted, that they are not abused – all the soft things really. That, rather than money. I don’t think that money is a prime motivator for a lot of people. I think a lot of people would take less money if they had a better quality of life and more respect at work, myself. (EMG1)

I think that’s also very valuable and it doesn’t have to be financial reward. I was thinking – I mean this week, Viktor wasn’t very well and I thought let’s go and get him a get well card and say thank you for what you do and don’t worry that you’re not here. You know? So it’s sometimes just dropping a card to somebody or a note to somebody. Not over the top so that it becomes kind of meaningless, but I think positive feedback is a reward yeah? It’s very important that people know what they are doing well but also where they can improve, I think not false or whatever, it’s rewarding to know that you’ve done well but it’s also rewarding to know that you’ve got a way to go in another area and that you’ll be supported. I think financial reward in learning and teaching is pretty rare, I mean there is the teaching fellowship prize type but I suppose it’s trying to get people…this year I endeavoured to get them invited to the ‘Fellowship Dinner’ because I said they are teaching fellows they’re not UL fellows so I think they should go to the Fellowship Dinner because that way it will make them feel valued. So I think a range of mechanisms. (EMG2)

I think a base salary, but I am also very much in favour of – I have to be very careful – this one has got to be very well thought through because inevitably who do you reward? I mean is it just the top guy or the top lady or the top you know? I think if you are going to reward performance in a particular unit or a particular school you have to try wherever possible to ensure that everybody is included and everybody, if it can be – although it obviously can’t be – is aware of what the performance or of what people are given but to try and include as many people as possible that have contributed to that performance or otherwise. I was going to go on and say that it simply isn’t about money, critically for more people that’s the most important one but it is about – I don’t know – sabbaticals, more money for professional development, attending more
courses etc, etc, Rewarding performance isn't simply about money. Even if you stick a star on their forehead and say you're the star for the day! (EMG3)

People get kind of upset when you talk about reward – you know, reward means different things to different people – an example could be freeing up someone’s time so that they can engage in research, but it could be about going off to undertake a particular piece of work that they are interested in – so it’s about defining that, it’s about incentivising staff and at the end of the day if you talk about a sort of rewards / incentive scheme, people think it’s a bit crude because people see it as money, but I think it’s about how to incentivise individuals to achieve targets; and people are incentivised by a whole variety of things and I think it all goes hand in hand if you are talking about performance. (EMG4)
SECTION TWO

The Performance Conundrum

Transcribed Interviews from UL’s Senior Managerial Group

April 2009
SECTION TWO: THE PERFORMANCE CONUNDRUM - TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEWS FROM UL’S SENIOR MANAGERIAL GROUP

UNDERSTANDING THE TERM PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

What in your opinion constitutes performance – how would you describe it? What does it mean to you as a Head of Unit?

Performance has to relate to something – so you need to have a task and a measure, for example if you type a letter and you make six mistakes and you are RSA I qualified, then you could say that’s not good enough we ought to be aiming for less than two mistakes. (SMGHOUM1)

To a section like mine, performance is delivering what my customers want or what your customers want. I mean at the end of the day, I could sit here - as I did, I mean that was the attraction of coming to UL – there is no precedent and I mean you can create it in your style. Umm but the reality is, we’re a service department and if what I want to do is irrelevant to even what the heads of schools and departments want, then I’ve failed haven’t I? But as I’ve have done on a number of occasions is to go out and meet the heads of schools and say well you know this is where we’re going at the moment, is this relevant to you and is this an improvement to you? And if they say ‘yes’, great, and if they say well what the hells the point in that, then… I mean, we could be the most efficient department in the entire university but if what we were doing is not relevant or beneficial to our customers then it’s pointless, so to me performance is delivering what the customers’ want. (SMGHOUM2)

Well the starting point is meeting the day to day operational targets. For example if you have a stack of invoices, they need to be processed that day, or we have to ensure that at certain times payroll is run. From that point of view it’s a bit like a manufacturing environment. Some of it though is a bit more innovative, like the development of our management information systems – more useful information delivered in a more timely manner. (SMGHOUM3)

If you have clear objectives and you achieve them, then you should be performing quite well. We have a management group and a clear line management structure. I don’t dominate and I’m not autocratic in style but at the end of the day I do have to make decisions. I think you have to have clear principles behind anything you do. You need to put people first and you’ve got to know what is right and what is wrong. (SMGHOUM4)

To me performance is primarily two things. First, doing the things you are required and expected to do, to the right standard and in a timely manner. The other aspect of performance is perhaps less defined and it’s about adding value to what we do through being dynamic in what one is doing and outside the definitions of the job. It’s about making connections to things, taking initiative
and speculation very much in terms of information. We rely a lot on information and we need to have the ability to advise and influence, to be inquisitive, speculate on information. It’s more difficult to measure but it’s about the individual getting out there. (SMGHOUM5)

In one respect it’s easier when you’ve got trading accounts because you’ve got a discipline and targets and a business plan which has been carefully thought through in advance and you perform to that standard. At a minimum you have to meet your targets but ideally you should exceed them. They also have to be relevant and fit into the bigger picture. (SMGHOUF9)

Managing performance in the working environment is about identifying what performance is required through an objective setting process, establishing standards and targets for performance, then developing a methodology for saying, well how do we know you are working to those standards? That to me is performance the way I see it and it’s linked to a very formal process starting with strategic objectives going down to second, third and fourth tier so that people have a very clear view of where they are in the organisation. (SMGHOUM6)

The start of it would be that you are all doing your job, and then the performance bit is all related to how the team engages with you – it’s not just about me – if I’m performing well it’s because my team are performing well, so the onus is on me to make sure my team is motivated and that they understand where I’m coming from so that they’re all achieving their own goals and are happy, that’s how I see performance. (SMGHOUF8)

Meeting the needs of my users and managers – that’s my role. (SMGHOUM7)
UNDERSTANDING THE TERM PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

What in your opinion constitutes performance – how would you describe it? What does it mean to you as a Head of School?

Performance is, I feel, the outcome of the interaction between what a colleague ‘needs’ via SDR in order to do their job effectively and grow as an academic/project worker etc and the ‘demands’ placed on them by individuals like me and the organisational generally [i.e. School and institutional goals/measurable targets. This will mean different things in differing contexts - i.e. business-, strategic-, enterprise- or corporate. Performance Management, as I understand it is a popular term used mainly in the IT and/or business world to describe a category of technologies and management practices that enable organizations to translate strategies into plans, monitor execution and provide insight to improve financial and operational performance. As I see it, it is an ‘umbrella term’ to describe the methodologies, processes and systems used to monitor and manage the business performance of an enterprise, unit [like our School] and individual – where that person’s work is readily quantifiable in terms of outputs. For me it also has links to ‘value based management’ - developed by McClelland and others in the 1960’s when studying company learning. This is when the organisation and/or external assessors evaluate the organisational ‘climate’ and judge ‘the way it is around here.’ I view this as very important and see it as a holistic management approach which ensures, for example, that my School is run consistently on key values that maximize stakeholder thinking. (SMGHOSM10)

Success I suppose - in a word - but to go back to what I said earlier, performance is about people having ownership of whatever they are doing, being motivated by whatever they are doing, and obviously accountable and then that will breed success. (SMGHOSM11)

To me, in order for it to be measurable it would have to be achieving it’s objectives, because we now have the school development plans as they’re now called, and the way I chose to present it was to go through each of UL’s objectives in turn - all 14 of them – although I think I might have taken out the HR one because that was to do with HR rather than me so… I mean that’s a very boring response isn’t it really? But how you get there is what it’s all about really – how you achieve what you agreed to achieve and the agreement has got to be around UL’s targets. (SMGHOSF16)

You have to first of all define the level of performance you are looking at. Is it at unit level or at school level? At school level it’s about creating a model vision with aims. This sets your template for performance. If I give you an example of two types of performance:

1. On the one hand, you can take on a youngster who wants to compete in the Olympics at 18. This scenario would involve a long term plan with timescales against age at all the different stages. You would have to identify
short falls in performance at all the different stages and put in place appropriate development to make sure that the individual was able to meet the required elements of performance within the agreed timescales.

2. On the other hand, if you had an Olympic competitor, they would be aiming to perform at the highest levels at all times and would need to sustain their performance over a prolonged period of time.

A useful way to start looking at performance is to begin by mapping out key elements of performance using a “spider diagram”. Once you have done that you can rate yourself on a scale of one to ten against that particular performance area. (SMGHOSM12)

Performance is something that all staff have to take some responsibility for, but I think our recruitment and retention rates (for students) are critical. (SMGHOSM13)

It’s difficult, I suppose it’s being able to do and show that you are operating effectively. (SMGHOSF17)

The sort of things that have got to be done well – not that they always are – are the three basic things of being a teacher – you’ve got to be able to assess well, you’ve got to be able to prepare well, and be up to speed on the subject matter. If a person can do all of those things, and does them well, then they are like gold and that’s the performance that counts. (SMGHOSM14)

I would probably suggest agreed targets – that’s how I measure performance – so we’ll agree on the targets and then one monitors how we are achieving these targets. (SMGHOSM15)
MEASURING AND MANAGING PERFORMANCE AT UNIT LEVEL

How do you currently measure and manage performance at Unit level?

Firstly we have our budgets - which we have to work within, secondly we have time – meeting deadlines etc. and thirdly we have to meet our client expectations – what we are not good at, is asking the client what they want! (SMGHOUM1)

Two ways: formally and informally. Formally are a small set of performance indicators that we retain and manage and they go into annual report to audit committee. Informally it's “have you done what I've asked you to do when I've asked you to do it?” (SMGHOUM2)

It’s about becoming more efficient and effective as well, for example, we are now collecting student fees more effectively which means less debt for the organisation and also frees up time for staff to review their systems. It's a gradual change process – some people and systems have been here for donkey’s years – we’ve been here for 20 years and we’ve always done it this way for 20 years. OK it might actually be the best way to do it, but you need to review what you are doing to find out! Over the years we tend to get incremental increase because we take on new things and then find we need an extra .5 admin person to carry out that work, but what we ought to be saying is why are we doing this work and do we really need to be doing it? (SMGHOUM3)

Certainly HEFCW keeps a close watch on Higher Education. We have to present an analysis every year of what we have achieved. (SMGHOUM4)

Of course whatever we do we would monitor, because one would hope that we were adding or providing some sort of value. (SMGHOUM5)

Feedback: We do a lot of surveys to engage our customers. We have to understand what our customers need – we have to be in tune with the organisation and the future requirements. (SMGHOUMF9)

Through sets of objectives: We have within HR, set objectives in the Corporate Strategic Plan and from that, we have an HR Strategy with its own action plan and objectives. I then have my own personal objectives which are related to that and those of my line manager. Senior officers within HR have their own personal objectives, so in effect they help me to achieve the wider objectives. That's the easy bit in a way because it's easy to see where the strategy sits. The more difficult bit, is where you are not looking at targets, you’re looking at standards – so with the operational teams who are more concerned with the standards for example, we’ve got a recruitment campaign and we want to do it in X, Y and Z – that’s what we are not very good at currently, which is why we’ve got an operations manager here to establish sets of standards for measuring performance at operational level as well as at strategic and policy
level. At policy level in terms of the planning process, individual plans do exist, and where ever possible we've got SMART objectives in there. We do actually distinguish between targets and standards and timescales. It's very well articulated, but they are also living documents, they're vibrant documents, they're iterations, so we start with X and end up with Z, but we work within a planning framework which is an annual process linked to the budget setting process, linked to the Corporate Strategic Planning process, linked to the 4 year corporate plan – so in that sense we are very, very well structured. (SMGHOUM6)

I've been building this up gradually now but the Staff Review is used as part of that process, not just as an annual review but on a more regular basis. We've now re-organised the department so there are now 3 sub groups if you like, so I tend to have 1 – 1's with the people that I head and the others have 1 – 1's with the people they head. That's how I manage to monitor how everything is going: you know - regular communication. (SMGHOUF8)

I manage performance through things like annual reports, to see if we achieved what we set out to achieve in our strategies, whether we fell below or whether the world changed and the strategy was wrong in the first place. The best example of that was merger – for UL the world changed! If you think about it this time last year we had only just fallen out of talks with the University of Poppleton and the strategy was set in about June so the strategy for that year was all about merger – so the annual report says we didn't do any of that! (SMGHOUM7)
MEASURING AND MANAGING PERFORMANCE AT SCHOOL LEVEL

How do you currently measure and manage performance at school level?

If you go back to the original thing – the European Foundation for Quality Management, (EFQM) the one thing it will be about is measuring it through outcomes and outcomes obviously in terms of results, and results for me is in terms of climate and we’ve just been made Investors in People and I think the school environment is good – I think it’s very good – but it’s nice to have IiP tell us it is. And simplistically, I measure climate by talking, by questioning, management by walking about and getting a feel for literally “how it is around here” and by listening and by hearing the story telling – getting to understand the narrative of the school. And the general impression would be that it’s good around here but it’s us against the world sometimes. That conversation I’ve just had on the phone is organizational climate – I mean you get a micro climate in the school which I can monitor and manage, develop and grow, but at the end of the day if you’ve got to have hard measures then it’s about how many bums can you put on seats – do we recruit well? And we’ve grown in terms of student numbers and this is the best ever and then you get your budget cut by £385,000. I like to be able to manage more effectively and with tier one and tier two, to be able to challenge the logic behind the resource allocation model, which allows me to grow by default rather than to support me in the school. Frankly I think it’s fundamentally flawed. We had an e-mail the other day that said this is where your schools are and this is what your budget is and by the way there are three schools still carrying a deficit budget. Well we’re one of those schools, but four years ago £40,000 from one of our programmes didn’t come into our school, it went to another school and I found out where that money was, but did we get it back? NO. And how much were we over that year? – about £30,000! And it’s a joke, an absolute joke – how not to manage – but that’s our whole rational at level two/level one – it’s a fiscal system and this is a people organisation. Now I know you’ve got to come in within budget, but you’ve got to allow schools to be more properly effective and the only way you can do that is through devolved management. And devolved financial management, is something that would enable schools to be much more effective – it may be Darwinian as well because some schools as they stand would go to the wall and maybe we can’t have that in an educational environment, so that means that you have to go back to this idea of disaggregated wealth which we have, but don’t have. And our school could have grown so much more, it could have taken some money from Sport, but no, Sport is fairly omnipotent and you know, a lot of their wealth stays with them and so the big get bigger and the little ones scramble around. And what is particularly interesting to me, is that I don’t think the School considers its number and size to be very effective. I don’t think it is anywhere as near as effective as it could be, but you know it depends on how you measure effectiveness and value added. Now I know, (to use managers speak), that I get discretionary effort from my colleagues – they go the extra mile, they give the extra stuff and I know at least three or four schools that do not get that, but the base measure of my effectiveness is have we brought the school in on
budget and/or have we put bums on seats, and that is a very narrow measurement of ‘Leadership Effectiveness’. (SMGHOSM10)

That’s very difficult to answer because the only way, the only time, it’s discussed with everybody individually is in staff development and review and that’s not supposed to be about performance management, so although objectives are set, there are lots of things around that scheme that make it quite clear that it’s nothing what so ever to do with disciplinary procedures, so it’s very difficult to talk about performance without reward and discipline coming into it. (SMGHOSF16)

The School Management and Planning Team (SMPT) revisit on a regular basis the schools objectives – have we achieved X, Y and Z? – Should we approach things differently? – Are there things in this plan that are no longer relevant or not going to work, that we should put a line through? We also have the school’s strategic and operational plan which we always review in March, in terms of looking at anything we might have forgotten that we said we would do! We also carry out an end of year analysis against the plans. (SMGHOSM12)

The proportion of staff engaged in research. We currently have about 40 out of 78 which is over half, so quite good. The recruitment of students is another measurement – I’m currently down by about 80. (SMGHOSM13)

Well we don’t really measure performance in that sense. I don’t think HR has previously played a really strong part and I think we have only recently put better HR practices and systems in place. If I focus on the student experience in my role as an academic manager and I subscribe to the model of the total student experience, then you have to have a lot of feedback mechanisms in place in terms of what’s working well and what’s not working well. The school is very big and I don’t necessarily experience the lectures, I might hear about the problem but it’s very difficult to get inside that classroom and get the appropriate data. There is something about pass rates and appropriate maintenance of academic standards and sometimes we blame ourselves and say well actually, we didn’t teach that very well and sometimes we blame the students for not being able to achieve, so there is a lot of flex. It’s complex, it’s not like producing widgets where you can say we had a failure rate of 2%. Sometimes we have a failure rate of 50% if the students aren’t up to it. But then we would be criticising our teaching and all sorts of things and it’s all very complex and it’s very difficult to measure. I think you have to intervene when people are seriously underperforming but actually it’s about how you get to that point where you can kind of open that sort of conversation. The support mechanisms we’ve got e.g. the harassment and bullying policy are kind of very drawn out and being an academic requires that you have a lot of confidence and the one thing you can’t do is knock that confidence, you have to build peoples’ confidence – you might like to consider this, you might like to consider that. The support staff are easier because they either do this or they don’t – academic performance is different. (SMGHOSF17)
Not nearly enough is the answer to that! People are in discipline groups and they try to take an interest in each others groups, for example when it comes to double marking. We have a school policy for example that all dissertations are double marked and that all course work and exams are sample double marked – so that’s the beginning of a system. It doesn’t necessarily give you consistency, although you could be consistently rotten for example if you are the most powerful person in a subject area and you’re not published, you could drag everyone down to your level. (SMGHOSM14)

Well we’ve got like targets for students, we’ve got budget targets, and we’ve got research targets. For each activity within the school, we set targets in our operational plan and we monitor these targets in our SMPT meetings on a fortnightly basis. (SMGHOSM15)
MEASURING UP

As a Head of Unit, what do you measure your performance against (benchmarking)?
How do you know you are good?

When I first came to UL we used to have 8,000 portable appliances and two electricians to test them. Now we have 20,000 portable appliances and the same resource – two electricians – that’s all about performance. At a more global level we have the Estates Management Statistics (EMS) so that you can measure right across the board, although if you compare yourself with places like Oxford, Cambridge or Durham they are not at all like for like so we tend to use similar organisations to ourselves such as Exeter, Bath or Loughborough. When I first came here, I was amazed that there were no national guidelines. In Estates, performance is really still in its infancy – the EMS is only in it’s fourth year now and we do have a group looking at ‘The Affordable Estate’. As far as external Performance Indicators are concerned we don’t actually have any. The National Audit Office did come up with the notion of ‘Space Utilisation’ which they advise should be at 30%. (SMGHOUM1)

Yes, quite extensively throughout all sectors, again because I sit on this assembly group which is looking to encourage cross sector collaboration. (SMGHOUM2)

We take a much keener interest now in financial indicators. We look at how HEFCW measures us for example by our current asset ratio. We look at the Welsh Sector and other new universities such as Swansea and Newport to see what they are doing, and we have an established Agresso user group, so that we can share good practice and constantly review what we do, so that we can operate more efficiently and better. (SMGHOUM3)

I’m fairly new to this job so I’m still learning the ropes. (SMGHOUM4)

When we were looking at potential merger with the University of Poppleton, we inevitably looked at their strategy office and they no doubt looked at us, and what became apparent, was the different levels that they pay at. Staff that were operating at a considerably lower level, were getting paid more than us and that was an issue. So salaries do come into it. In terms of benchmarking, competencies are difficult – I can describe the various knowledge and experience I would expect, but there isn’t a bespoke professional competency as such, there isn’t a badge – you demonstrate your own badge as it were through your knowledge and experience. I’ve worked in other organisations so I have my own view of what the knowledge and experience should look like, and although the climate changes and we have to sometimes take on new functions, I can make an informal judgement. (SMGHOUM5)

Yes, we do price benchmarking annually across all our services. You can also benchmark by your networking – it’s about understanding the requirements.
We try to get contributions and ownership by the deliverers – we’re doing a lot more of that now, but that’s really about improving performance. We belong to professional associations and groups, for example we are one of the leading universities in the application of the SMART Card. We also look at the commercial sector in terms of what they provide and what they charge. (SMGHOUF9)

If you mean do we benchmark against the sector, yes, but although we’re in the sector you have to remember we’re all very different, for example some of the work we undertook during the merger debate was like looking at apples and pears when we were looking at HR at the University of Poppleton, compared to HR at UL in terms of the cost of the function, the numbers of staff compared to the numbers of students etc. We’re very different organisations, in very different settings, and you can’t simply take a simple benchmark or simple indicators – our indicators are actually just statements of fact with out any context. What I think it is often better to do, is to take a national statistic like sickness absence, which is a problem. It’s recognised in the private sector and it’s recognised in the public sector and it’s getting worse, so one of our objectives is to reduce the opportunity costs of sickness absence by 33% over the life of the Corporate Strategic Plan. That is more meaningful – so it isn’t an HR function, it’s an HR activity that we are taking a lead on. So that’s a more useful way of benchmarking. In terms of internal benchmarking it makes absolutely no sense what so ever for us to benchmark ourselves against the estates office or the School of Lifelong Learning. Again, it’s apples and pears, other than to say for example a simple statement like ‘we all have to come in on budget at the end of the financial year’ - and if we don’t, then there has to be a reason. If you take the sickness absence target for example, I have a lead role in assisting other sections to reduce their sickness absence, but I also have a responsibility to manage the sickness absence within my own department. Now for me that isn’t so much of a problem because I have 18 staff and little sickness, but for Facilities for example with 100’s of staff and many of them manual workers on low pay, who are in the business of going sick, it wouldn’t be a fair comparison – that’s why I’m loathed to publish statistics which give an indication against a sort of league table, like figures against attendance or non-attendance rates, recruitment, turnover – it doesn’t really help because you don’t know the local circumstances. (SMGHOUM6)

If we are comparing our student recruitment processes, we have some externally set performance indicators that we work to. We also use internal measures for example we monitor the level of enquiries, so that we can see how we are doing in comparison to last year, and if we’ve had a particular campaign running, we ask students how they heard of us to see if that has worked. That’s the sort of activity that we can compare and monitor in the office. (SMGHOUF8)

1 A SMART card is defined any pocket-sized card with embedded integrated circuits which can process information.
Yes, in terms of things like expenditure on books we have school stats. For some of the capital grants from HEFCW we have had to do reports on numbers of workstations in relation to student numbers. There are no externally imposed indicators over and above the HESA$^2$ and HESES$^3$ returns but we set our own standards so we can benchmark against ourselves year on year. For example we measure the numbers through the gates in the libraries and learning centres to see if that’s going up or down and we monitor the number of ‘help desk’$^4$ calls – is that increasing or decreasing? and we use that to monitor if there are any problems in particular areas for example we may identify a training issue because we are getting so may ‘help desk’ calls from staff who don’t know how to use a particular application. So we do quite a lot of internal measuring and monitoring. (SMGHOUM7).

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$^2$ The Higher Education Statistics Agency – it is a statutory requirement for HEIs to submit set data on an annual basis

$^3$ The Higher Education Students Early Statistics Survey – a particular data set required by the Higher Education Statistics Agency

$^4$ Help desk – a call centre set up where staff can get assistance with any IT related queries or problems
MEASURING UP

As a Head of School, what do you measure your performance against (benchmarking)?
How do you know you are good?

The only benchmarking that I think has been used by any school is that which has come via Professor Snape, linked to the nature of our student intake from particular social classes, widening access indicators, disability indicators, ethnic minority indicators, retention rates – those things have been put through to us now for the first time and we are coming out very favorably because we’ve got a good mix of full time and part time portfolio. But until Professor Snape did that breakdown: no. We would have done it in terms of our target numbers – did we meet our target numbers for full time and part time, and if not, why not? And I can tell you that the reasons were very poor approaches to marketing or small amounts of funding to support us in gaining our raw product i.e. the student portfolio. So you know, this institution has got a huge way to go on that. Yes, I think we should use benchmark criteria, but I don’t think it should be all pervasive. Having said that you know, the HESA returns and those sorts of stats – the HEFCW widening access numbers are going to be increasingly important to our strategy and we will as Heads of Schools be much more accountable for those sorts of things. But I would want tier two and tier one to be made accountable – OK if those are important indicators to benchmark, how will they then facilitate, through financial support and human resource support, the schools? – because they don’t because the resource allocation model is too simplistic a model. (SMGHOSM10)

Evaluation plays a part but in terms of benchmarking we’re looking probably at first destination and in terms of subject, very often comments or whatever, come back to us in terms of what we are doing and there’s all the other things apart from the formal evaluative process – you know, where a student will do something over and above that which they do all the time. Umm recruitment is a key thing for us – we work very much as a team and I think sometimes, excepting all the other things I said, you know, they are motivated, they have got ownership and then things don’t always work out, for whatever reason, and there’s nothing really that we can do about it – it’s a teamwork sort of thing if something doesn’t happen, OK, It doesn’t happen, but that person isn’t to blame, because I know that within the school they do have that sort of ownership and they are motivated. If it still doesn’t happen then it’s for us as a team to put it right. But obviously, recruitment is a key thing – but at the end of last year this person had a lot of students who had dropped out – and she’s one of the hardest working people I know and it was just one of those things – we can look at why, and we can analyse why, but it all comes down to things like the boyfriend has moved or pregnancy or what ever it was – it was just one of those things. Those I think would be the key indicators. Reputation is also another one for us. I mean we have developed to the stage where we are the largest school for education and we have been successful certainly in terms of inspection reports. (SMGHOSM11)
In terms of benchmarking, we obviously have the RAE rating. Unfortunately this rating doesn’t actually change over a five to six year period, but our Director of R&D is always trying to make value judgments about others performance in relation to our competitors. The recruitment of our students, particularly in relation to their caliber, is very important as a measure. I tend to think that if you have recruited the best staff and students and have then put in place a good timetable, you should be able to say as a Head of School – “off you go”!

I use targets in terms of performance. (SMGHOSM13)

Well yes, there’s all sort of things – student withdrawal rates, staff absence – you have to develop a feel for an area. These league tables are quite interesting as externally imposed indicators. Pass rates of students – it’s really interesting for example, if you fail 100% then you aren’t delivering, so some of the measures aren’t useful. Student satisfaction, well you would want to know about those 4% and what they didn’t like about it – Mr and Mrs Grumpy there is always a percentage! (SMGHOSF17)

No, it’s quite difficult. The Strategy Office occasionally give us some data although not very consistently – but some of the stuff they produce is very good and I’m very impressed they can actually find some data somewhere, and when they do produce this data then we can use it. About a year a go they produced some comparative data on average numbers of firsts and 2:1’s and percentages and I can get really hooked into that because umm it provides very important lessons for some people who have difficulty learning lessons. There are some people who think we are a higher education system of stars and we bloody well aren’t. We’ve got about a third of the unit of resource for each subject and there will be stars in their fields what ever university we were at and they are being taught by us and by and large we are not stars - I mean some people are bloody good and some of them will be stars - most of us are a bit more honest with ourselves and with them that we aren’t and it’s difficult to find any stars in the context of trying to do our jobs of work – we just haven’t got the b***** time. I’ve asked the Strategy Office to come up – I’ve asked them back in June or July - with some figures which might indicate whether we are rewarding students correctly – every school has the same problem – staff won’t give good marks, it’s always that a clear first is 72% and if it were a clear first then it should get 85% and if it gets 85% as a clear first then it will drag a performance of 65/65/65 up to a 70% average so you will actually end up giving that person a first. If you however, give them a 71 and several other people have given them a 67, well tough, they will be getting a 2:1. Now that might be right and right for that particular student, but not enough people are prepared to go rather boldly up into the top part of the marking range. I mean some students force us into the bottom marking range – if someone does absolutely nothing then I’m afraid, nothing is what they get and there’s nothing you can do about someone at that end of the scale even though you might be the most generous marker (which I am)! But at the other end, someone who does work better than you yourself could do – and I mean I’ve had work given to me and thought that has to be in
the 80s/90s even 100s – but that’s an example of how you could benchmark. But it’s very difficult to benchmark performance in a lecture and attending other peoples lectures in the school is not hugely common or widespread partly because people are busy and partly because of a slight reluctance to be invasive. I mean I’ve done it and I’ve had other colleagues sitting in on my classes in the past, because I actually feel that if you are doing it in front of students you may as well be doing it in front of colleagues and they may actually give you a bit more honest feedback. I’ve had one or two colleagues who have wanted to improve their teaching invite me along (not as an expert or anything) but just as an honest critique so it’s not benchmarking as such but more as part of quality standards. (SMGHOSM14)

Yeah in some areas we use some benchmarking. I think until now that we haven’t used it as yet, but we always compare ourselves with the performance of other schools in UL, or with things like the student retention rate, so we will compare that with the national benchmarks, yeah, then there’s for example, the gender and balance on our courses – we compare that when we look at it – we compare it with the national benchmarks. (SMGHOSM15)

Question not asked to SMGHOSF16
MEASURING AND MANAGING INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE

How do you currently measure and manage performance at an individual level within your unit?

Through the prescribed human resources procedure that you give to us of course! Through the staff appraisal process – I mean that’s the bottom line because it comes back to the deliverables and the performance thing that we talked about at the beginning, the cascading of leadership, but the reality is that Professor Slughorn and I sit down, it’s unusual which is why I don’t quote it, but the reality is, is that I go to Slughorn and I say well this is what I think we should be doing for the next 12 months, are you happy with that? So the reality turns out to be unusual, umm but the reality then is, well I pitch out what I think we should be doing and what we as a small team of people are capable of doing. And I like stretch targets, but on the other hand I don’t like unrealistic targets. (SMGHOUM2)

That’s the more difficult one! Through the Staff Review and Development scheme we set objectives although we are not very good at making them SMART\(^5\). Some objectives aren’t actually very real so you have to question why we use them. (SMGHOUM1)

We have job descriptions although we don’t always use that – staff that have been here a long time know what they are doing. The appraisal (and objective setting) is seen rather as a formality because if you have 100 invoices to process today, you will have 100 invoices to process the next day and the next and if someone comes up with any other things then that’s a bit of a bonus but we have managed to reduce the levels of debt because we chase students better. Because of Investors in People we now have a monthly senior managers meeting and then a half hour feedback session following that to all staff. I have noticed that staff feel more included and therefore make more contribution. (SMGHOUM3)

Through staff review where we set targets which are clear and specific, but I think staff review needs to be looked at across UL as I don’t think it is applied consistently. (SMGHOUM4)

We are a small office and therefore we have a lot of informal as well as formal interaction. We also have a working knowledge of each others job – we support each other where someone has a lead responsibility and therefore we are able to sub for each other when necessary, so that’s one way of managing performance, via that daily interaction. More formally every week I’ll advise what our actions are going to be for the next week and we record what our actions were against the actions that we set the previous week and of course we also reflect upon the things we were asked to do at the last moment by senior management! This way we can monitor workloads. We also meet

\(^5\) SMART - Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timed
periodically to discuss specific aspects of work and always meet on a termly basis to reflect on our learning and set the agenda for the following term – what are the things we need to do. All these processes interlink. The obviously there’s the Staff Review and Development...umm which I think would be far better if it were an appraisal because to be honest with you – I mean it may well be different if we had problems in the office – but by the time you get to the end of the year, it's more of less a waste of space, because we have plenty of things in the interim, so the only thing we do tend to focus on – even if this is on the record – it a bit of form filling! The other way I measure performance is to get informal feedback from clients and of course I get feedback from Madame Pomfrey. (SMGHOUM5)

Various ways: through the staff review and development scheme but more and more by engaging them in targets. Previously the targets were all handled centrally with the managers, then we devolved the targets out to the units and then we went one step further and involved staff in planning those targets for the following year so they owned them. Then in the team meetings, the targets are discussed with the staff and the managers. I think getting staff to understand the targets and understand the importance of achieving them is key. The biggest thing about measuring is having clarity of what it is we are trying to achieve and then getting staff to understand it. That to me is how you measure and manage performance – and by discussing it on a regular basis. (SMGHOUF9)

I have six people reporting directly to me and each of those has their own action plans with a set of objectives which I use to monitor performance – not in a tick box way but in a way that I know that certain individuals are working on certain priorities. The team knows that and the organisation knows that and through weekly team meetings, we monitor progress against that. It isn’t as simple as saying we look at each objective and each bit within that objective every single week, it doesn’t work that way because priorities change. What I want to do is look at the picture over a longer period of time. (SMGHOUM6)

What I’ve noticed, because I’ve been doing pretty much the whole load of staff reviews, is very much sort of umm that they haven’t been allowed to develop as much as they should. So I’ve tried to turn it on it’s head a bit and try and find out from the employee then, want do they want to sort of achieve - and how can we sort of map that in with what the role needs to achieve? That really has got people talking so they can get more out of their job really and actually, it’s the way people are working now and it’s like that person has sat back and thought right, this is what my job is all about so it’s been all engaging and getting them to talk about them – which is what the staff review is all about, getting the person to talk more about them. (SMGHOUF8)

There’s the Staff Review and Development and that sort of measures performance in that you are looking for development needs – you have to measure performance to evaluate whether there is a requirement for development. So an aspect of that looks at performance. Other performance
measures are individual meetings with the people I line manage – it basically tells me whether they think they are doing well and also when they think they are not doing so well! (SMGHOUM7)
MEASURING AND MANAGING INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE

How do you currently measure and manage performance at an individual level within your school?

Well, we go through the staff development and review and we agree a series of targets for the individual. Those targets tend to be developmental in terms of growing them in terms of their knowledge, skills and understanding. They are not measured in a simplistic way, for example if Kreacher is the IT lecturer, I don’t measure her work in terms of ‘there are extra students this year, she must have done well’ – because the recruitment side of things is beyond her control. But I know from student evaluations and student course reporting – more qualitative measures – what the students have said about their experience in terms of qualitative measures, how many people have progressed through that programme and been successful. But then I also say to her, OK well, we wanted to grow you didn’t we? – Have you presented that paper at conference? Have you gone out there and done other things with the ICT, with the international office? And we agree those sorts of developmental targets and I expect her to do that. (SMGHOSM10)

As far as I am concerned, umm it’s just sort of moving forward with people umm so that they don’t become stuck in umm a particular area or whatever and that they show a willingness to, and again a motivation to develop across a range of skills. I suppose I would rate poor performance as standing still. (SMGHOSM11)

That is done through the staff review because it’s got objectives and staff want to have it. I don’t do all of them, I deal with the Head of Centre and the induction. (SMGHOSF16)

I think it was a lot easier four to five years ago when the school was so much smaller. I used to meet with every member of staff twice a year. I have always had an open door policy so if anyone has an issue, they can come and see me. So in the past, I have always had a very hands-on approach, where as now, I tend to get second hand information now that the school is so much larger. I currently have six to eight reviewers in place who help to take the responsibility; but I still see people who want to have a chat about their workload, for example. In terms of line management, I only tend to get the problems! I think some form of formalised devolved responsibility within the proposed new structures might help. At present, I have our core Management & Planning Team who have a certain amount of line management responsibility. In terms of peoples different roles in relation to Learning & Teaching, Research, Enterprise and Development, we find that most staff have an involvement in all three areas and therefore it is difficult to align senior staff to specific areas e.g. all staff involved in L&T. To this end, you get an eclectic mixture of reviewers and allocated staff! One leader/manager I have spoken to describes managing Academics as “like herding cats!” – they go on to say that you need to put some food out. They (Academics) then feel they have to contribute because they have come for the sandwiches! I find that most staff within the school are personally,
professionally and academically driven. It’s about getting square pegs in square holes – or round pegs in round holes (whichever!) In terms of managing the timetable, I ask individuals to map out what they most like to teach. I then set the timetable and explain to staff that if they get 90% plus of their requirements they should be satisfied and that the remaining 10% has to be done in relation to taking forward the school. (SMGHOSM12)

This is actually far more difficult! If Crabbe is doing phone design and Goyle is designing biros it’s very difficult. That is why it is important to have proper criteria in place. Often I find that people will be conscious of areas which are not running effectively and come up with solutions. For example we have recently reduced the amount of bureaucratic paperwork we had. (SMGHOSM13)

I try to be very positive about staff and I try to make some comment about performance all the time e.g. fantastic, excellent because then if something gets worse it’s easier to say well this isn’t up to your normal performance. I think confidence is a really important issue. I think that by interacting and making a truthful comment staff will expect that and so you can give a lot of feedback – it’s about having interactive relationships. (SMGHOSF17)

Well through the staff review process, I’ve just started and we’ve just reviewed that process within the school and we’ve tried to link the processes together – we’ve got the staff review, but it’s not linked to the annual course reports for example, so we’ve tried to link the two together, for the annual course report will suggest staff development needs for the course and we’ve tried to link the two processes together so that can be discussed during the review. And I decided to do all the staff myself. I think staff review needs a line manager – I think it will give it much more strength. So I ask each person – or the academics when they come to the review to bring with them their annual programme report, the module evaluation report, their workload, umm and their CV. We had an open day and I took all the staff out – sorry, an away day and we all discussed this and they all agreed that staff development wasn’t working as it should be it was just a lot of box ticking that you do once or twice a year and then it goes into the filing cabinet and it was not linking to other processes within the school so that when we tried to correlate staff development activity to course needs, there was no correlation at all. So we will try to link the two together. Even in some of the external examiners reports there was a summation of staff development needs, but that was not set into any other process…so we want to make it much more meaningful and make staff review and staff development really….I mean even between staff review and staff development there was no real correlation, so we will try to link these two together yeah? I’ve been Director for Learning and Teaching for about five years, and I really have real difficulties in that I’ve got real responsibilities, but no line management power. So I was expected to do and change and implement and develop and all that but I didn’t have the line management. So I can only ask for the director to do things but I can’t tell them. This has been discussed many times at the Learning and Teaching Board and at the Director of Learning and Teaching Forum and they have agreed that yes
there is a need for the Director of Learning and Teaching to have some line management. I think they are thinking now with the new structure, about the position of Deputy Head of School, and to make the Director of Learning and Teaching the Deputy Head of School to give him or her some line management power. Again, the course directors manage a team and they don’t have any line management, so that when they do a timetable for example or they try to produce some changes to the course they can only ask. But I mean implementation is really difficult. I mean in my school we had so many agreed procedures and processes, but implementation was very, very poor because there is no line management or they can’t tell people what to do. I mean in other universities that I have been to there were different models, but here where there is no line management power they all report to the HOS who then has to use his power back to chase things which is not very efficient. But yes I like the model that gives power to programme directors. (SMGHOSM15)

Not asked the question: SMGHOSM14
MANAGING UNDERPERFORMANCE

How do you manage underperformance in the unit – what tends to happen?

Hopefully there are early indications if someone is underperforming and that’s where the counselling comes in to find out why – there may be some valid reasons. We then have procedures in place which lay out a framework for dealing with poor performance – what to improve and how and within what timescales. At the one end of the scale you’ve got underperformance which could be too little work to do and at the other end you’ve got too much work to do. I think nowadays, we operate at the ‘too much to do’ end of the scale which could mean that quality sometimes gets compromised. There was one incidence, where I can give you an example of where there was not enough work to do. We recently took over the time tabling function and noticed that the time tabling staff were not utilised for the full year because their services were not required. We soon found them other work they could usefully do at different times of the year and do you know, the staff were delighted. It was through no fault of their own, just inefficient management I suppose. The other tensions we have, are around our DLO\(^6\). Our staff are pretty committed but we have to remember that they don’t get paid a lot. Some organisations have in place very sophisticated man hours systems which allow for the fair distribution of work. Here, the manager has to use his/her intuition to allocate the work. The DLO’s get the first call on all the MM1’s\(^7\) before any contractors are used, but the method of loading the men can be a bit crude and perhaps subjective. (SMGHOUM1)

Initially, I would sort out what the issues were, I mean again, the thing that I am very conscious of, is that clearly in the public sector, you’re not as free to say things that you probably would in the private sector. So you would be able to behave in a certain manner – whether it was Gee or British Airways - I would be able to say ‘no, go away, we’re managing this in the way we manage, and if you don’t like it, then tough.’ So I think you know, from our perspective, you very rapidly reach the point where you have to come to you guys and say ‘I have a HR issue here’, and of course I would be very disappointed if I ever reached that point, if I can’t manage it through dialogue and setting goals and just getting the issue out in the open and such. (SMGHOUM2)

We haven’t had much experience of underperformance over the years, if anything it’s sickness that is the problem because they are not here to do the work! We carry out one-to-ones with staff to find out why and do tell staff that it’s not acceptable to carry on taking every Monday off work because it lets their colleagues down. We are informal but firm and we are a close knit department. (SMGHOUM3)

\(^6\) Direct Labour Organisation
\(^7\) Forms for requesting Manual Maintenance work
First of all I would discuss any underperformance issues with the manager and keep a record or log of the difficulties. Then if things don’t improve we would use the capability procedure. The real problem is that no one wants to take any action. You can all be told to do something and 50 % of you comply but nothing happens to the other 50% that don’t comply. There’s a real non compliance issue. (SMGHOUM4)

Really through the performance management line, but the reason we’ve gone to having less formal meetings is that there fortunately isn’t an issue. Managing individual underperformance is a really time consuming issue and tends to have a detrimental effect on everyone else and I guess you can only really do it if you have a small office. I think you need to have a set of reigns and this is a bad analogy, but the reigns need to be like one of those retractable dog leads – long enough and flexible enough that the person doesn’t even know they are on a lead but where you are able to push a button and reel them in if necessary. (SMGHOUM5)

First of all it’s about getting back to the clarity of expectation – have we done our bit right? It goes back to the skills assessment – it could be a training and development need – what do we need to do to help you - and getting them engaged. That’s the starting point and then keeping on the case and in the end, if we get no where, we have to confront it. But we have to make sure that the front end is right - beyond that I would say it’s difficult. Underperformance which isn’t an overt disciplinary such as someone swearing at someone else…..I don’t think we really have an answer to it – I don’t think that as an organisation we get in gear and get behind it. I don’t think we have enough tools in place to deal with it and other organisations typically do and I don’t think we’re taking enough lessons from them. I’ve got people who I know shouldn’t be in those jobs. It’s when there are lots of little things rather than one big thing that it becomes a problem – we have a policy but we need greater clarity in terms of management training and more templates etc. on how to deal with issues – we’re all doing our own things far too much without standard procedures – we ought to have standard letters that go out if for example you’ve got cumulative absences – we’re all writing our own letters and unsure about things and we’re tip-toeing around, scared of doing the wrong thing. Every manager is doing things differently – we need a corporate stance. There’s a big cultural barrier to get over. (SMGHOUF9)

The starting point is having proper objectives and standards in place so that the individual knows what is expected. Underperformance would come to my attention either by those objectives not being met for a good reason - and there may be a good reason - or it could be because of capability, laziness what ever. But also, I might be assured that performance is good when actually I am getting feedback to the contrary so that’s why I encourage feedback from other sources, primarily second and third tier staff because HR is here to assist them, rather than individual members of staff who probably don’t like a lot of the things we do, but then we are not here to be liked and we don’t care!! (SMGHOUM6)
I wouldn’t go in feet first – I’d keep an eye on it to evaluate if there was a real problem before taking any action. (SMGHOUF8)

I usually raise it with them to see if that changes it – bring it to their attention is my view. If you hide it, then it’s not going to go away is my experience so far. But I can only talk about the people I line manage - although I do get involved at other levels of management when I get called in to assist. (SMGHOUM7)
MANAGING UNDER PERFORMANCE

How do you manage underperformance in the school – what tends to happen?

We’d have a chat – and quite quickly! And you know - confidentially here - that there is one person here and we have had four talks with him/her, we’ve re-defined his/her role and I’ve made it abundantly clear what I want him/her to do and now we’ve re-defined his/her role and taken responsibilities away from him/her, I think he’s/she’s performing pretty well and I’ve still tried to develop him/her as an individual so that he/she feels he/she is a valued persona and that’s how I’ve done it. But I’ve sat people down and talked to them and said, ‘look your main role is this – how do you think you are performing in it?’ and then said, ‘OK you think that but the perception about how you work with people and the results you are getting seem to contradict that’. I’ve never had to go down capability roads yet. I’ve had one other case, where retrospectively we’ve found out that systems within a particular programme were not as we would have liked them and unfortunately we found out about them during an end of season review and exam board, and that was because the person had a whole series of baggage and was unable to cope with everything that was going on. And I still felt that there were certain things – irrespective of his/her situation – that he/she should have done and we’ve had a chat about that and we are re-defining his/her role and have tightened up systems considerably so that that can never happen again. And you could say that that was my fault because we hadn’t monitored it closely enough, but it’s because we work on a principal of trust. And we know that that person is a competent, highly intelligent, articulate person and yet one or two circumstances combined to cause this situation – and I had asked him/her about certain things, but I never followed it through. (SMGHOSM10)

OK, I’d call them in and in the first instance we would sit down and talk about it, and it’s happened several times – which is obviously not that many - over the last eight months or whatever but something has gone wrong in the system, and you know, I can’t allow for that to happen within the school, so we’ll sit down and we’ll talk about it. Very often or in both these situations, there have been personal reasons or whatever. But what makes it most difficult is when someone doesn’t actually communicate that in the first instance. For instance, if someone comes in and says I’ve got a terrible problem I’ve got ‘blah blah blah,’ I can put mechanisms in place and we can sort it out, but when people start to avoid all that and the system falls down, then that’s when it’s drawn to my attention. In the first instance, what I will do is to bring them in and we will talk the issue through then following that, I will always say ‘if there is the slightest thing that’s beginning to go wrong, it’s important to come back’ so again, we can put in support mechanisms and that seems to have worked. If there is an issue, I will confront it, and I won’t leave it for any one else to do either. If there’s an issue with somebody in the school, I’ll talk to them. I think communication is the key thing. (SMGHOSM11)
I don't think that’s ever happened. I mean there are occasions where people – well almost every year – where people haven’t achieved the objectives that were set for them the previous year, but there are very good reasons why that was so. I mean if they didn’t, I expect they would just be given their objectives again for the next time. But I haven’t…well in every case – unless I’ve missed some – I’ve already known what the reason was because I was probably involved in why things didn’t go right, but I would do something if it was necessary, again, I think it would be a separate meeting and it would be based on equity. Where somebody’s not pulling their weight there have been situations like that, but nothing that I’ve been involved in, it’s been where heads of centres would come for advice on somebody else. But then it’s a separate section. (SMGHOSF16)

I generally bring them in for a coffee and a chat. I try to identify the issues and also try to determine if they see it as an issue. Managing individual performance is not easy when you are talking about teaching assessments. I try to encourage a culture of self improvement without trying to be judgmental. There are certain deadlines you can set/use in terms of key assessment or administrative dates, but I don’t tend to go down that route as we don’t tend to get many complaints in relation to this. Any complaints I do get are usually unfounded in relation to the student misunderstanding ‘real’ turn around times and dates. If someone has not met their deadlines I need to determine if they are being slack or they are actually too busy to achieve them because of the other commitments and workloads they actually have. Sometimes targets are not met because an individual has a personal goal that they have prioritised over meeting UL or school objectives e.g. marking is late because of other commitments. I find that there is a lot of peer group ribbing that goes on especially if for example, an exam board is held up because of someone’s slack marking – having said that, some staff are like armadillos! I have never had to discipline a member of staff for poor performance. (SMGHOSM12)

Sometimes you can’t, especially with staff that are cynical and disengaged. (SMGHOSM13)

Often it’s about clarity of goals and if I feel someone isn’t performing then I feel that I haven’t set the goals clearly and I don’t like that confrontational side of things. That’s why I try to invest a lot on the positive side, but for those that I can’t establish an interaction with…. I mean I want to intervene, but it’s almost gone too far and if I don’t know how to retrieve the situation, then it almost gets to be disciplinary before….. I do find the fact that I’m speaking through someone else, speaking through the school plan – and someone else’s interpretation of the school plan through their appraisal, you know Fred Weasley does the appraisal – it’s not a direct conversation you are having with them in terms of ‘how can you contribute to the plan, how can we use your strengths?’ – I don’t like that bit of the appraisal and I’ve tried to establish a system where people can make an appointment to come and see me to raise their concerns so that I can better see where they are coming from, or help them, or understand much more about what’s going on in the school. Line management
is an issue within UL – you’ve got the Head of School who is the only one with any authority, the Directors of.... Don’t see themselves as managers in that sense, so there is no sort of management responsibility. The whole nature of academic work varies – it’s not necessarily a team thing - it can be, but not always - and people can feel quite isolated. Just because someone isn’t at their desk doesn’t mean they are not working – it also doesn’t mean they are working! A lecturer can go in and as long as you keep the kids happy no one will know there’s a problem. So the line management issue is a problem and I think line managers need much more support, much more training in relation to performance management around a model of performance management that is UL’s model. I mean you get your Hitlers and soft soaps and all sorts of things but what does UL want from its managers? And I think that’s why this model thing you are building is really important, so that managers know what it is they should be doing and so they have a toolbox of mechanisms that they can use, like case studies and that would be helpful because we haven’t had anything like that in years. (SMGHOSF17)

Well basically, there’s a long tradition within UL of doing bugger all about it! – you give that person a lower timetable, as much training as possible, every opportunity to improve themselves, you tell them they have to improve themselves – and sometimes that’s terribly difficult on a personal level. I mean I have a colleague who I’ve worked on for three years who has now confronted most of her/his demons and there are still two demons that we are going to start work on now for this year. Getting rid of those two, she/he will, at pushing 60, make a reasonable teacher which is a shame isn’t it? But then again, this person wants to go on until she's/he’s 65 so over the next five years we can expect back some better performance which will make herself/himself and the students a lot happier. I’ve got another, who’s got a terrible reputation amongst students – which is probably not fully justified — and she/he is getting better rapidly, but I have put her/him under a fair bit of pressure, but she’s/he’s certainly putting in a lot of effort. I’ve got a third person who is really a hopeless case. She's/he's dim in everything, she’s/he’s done a lot of training and she/he thinks the world of herself/himself as a teacher, big difficulty turning up at the right time to meet the students, obviously hasn’t got a clue as to what she/he should be doing, doesn’t differentiate in the marks she/he gives students. Now, she/he has worked for two Deans and a Head and no one has ever confronted it – it’s the same policy, minimise her/his teaching. But I have confronted her/him and it’s not easy, because to a certain extent it’s very cruel to suddenly say after all these years you’re rubbish and the students think you’re rubbish – and they do, they move to other people’s modules because they can’t stand being taught by her/him and they don’t understand where her/his arguments are going because her/his brain isn’t functioning. I bloody despair about this place I must say. I am in the process of confronting her/him but I think it’s a total competency issue and we probably ought to sack her/him. I don’t want to sack her/him, I would much rather it hadn’t got to this stage and been left for so many years. (SMGHOSM14)
I would work very closely with them and keep on monitoring them very closely. We’ve got one member of staff like that and I’m really chasing him every day - have you done this, have you done that? And there are some improvements. I think persuasion and motivation and close monitoring. (SMGHOSM15)
RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

In terms of recruitment, how do you ensure that you get the best candidates for your unit, rather than the second best?

It depends on the job. As long as you get your job description right, your person specification right and then hopefully you are getting to the right market place - but because of funding that’s not easy to do – for straight forward jobs I’m sure local markets can supply most of the skills you need, but when you come to a Draco Malfoy type of job which has developed over the last eight years, it’s more difficult. I tried the local market and also put it on the web base – we are part of the Universities Association of Estate Directors, so I put his job out on that and said please let any of your staff know that this position is vacant and I had four applications, most of which were internal! It was a dreadful response and so you think OK, what am I going to do? You can go out again and widen the scope – But then you start to look at the job description and re-evaluate and you suddenly realise that what has happened, is that over eight years, a fully qualified architect came into post and developed an expertise in two directions – one in all the technicalities of Auto CAD and this system called Archibus which sits on Auto CAD, so he’s got all this expertise and then, he developed space management expertise. So in fact, you’ve got two jobs, not one. But two developed into one person – and you’re not going to get anyone else with those sorts of skills in five minutes - unless you double the salary, then you might get someone! So I’m going to have to split the role again and firstly get someone in who can deal with the technicalities and then develop someone else, to take over the space management side of things. (SMGHOUM1)

Oh pot luck! I think it’s very important that you put a lot of energy and a lot of effort into getting an accurate JD – specifying the attributes you are really looking for. That’s not a paper…well it is a paper work exercise, but it’s how you get to that point and about thinking really about what the role is going to be, what do you want? what have you got? and actually in answer to one of your other questions, that’s where benchmarking does come in – although I don’t call it benchmarking – but what do similar jobs in the sector require? What are other people asking for? What are those functions? So it’s about thinking through and then articulating what you’ve got so you know when the applications come through whether it’s really meeting that or not. We tend to advertise locally and unfortunately we don’t always get the spread – I think the other thing about recruiting the best candidates is about recognizing that you’re not going to get the perfect candidate. In this type of work - and it is very important – is to what extent is there a scope for the individual to develop. A lot of things can be learned, but some of the things you have to have right from day one, like attitude. And another thing, sorry, that is important, which is perhaps a bit technical, but it’s about having the right mixture of people on the interview panel so that you can make an appropriate offer – some of our work is quite morphous and it’s important that people can have an idea about what you are looking for. (SMGHOUM5)
Do you want the honest answer? We interview, I select the right person and I mark your interviewing sheets to reflect the person I want. Q - Is that acceptable? Yeah. I mean I think since I’ve been here I’ve never had any problems. The trouble with scoring is...... at the moment, you are supposed to score as you go along and the theory is, that at the end of the process you select the person with the best score. I mean it’s exactly the same as starting a tendering exercise, but the reality is.....in my department anyway, I can teach them the skills, but what I need is the personality and the lateral thinking, that’s what I need. So, I will choose somebody who I feel has the personality and the thought processes, that fits in with the team, because you can teach the skills but you can’t teach lateral thinking and you can’t teach personality and it’s the same with tendering. We always put a load of criteria in – ‘it will not be a pile of shit, it will be best value’ and so on, but the reality is that what you are doing is giving yourself sufficient scope to maneuver your way around so that you get – and it’s probably a bit of a gut feeling – you end up with what you feel is probably the most appropriate choice given the selection. Now, it’s the same for HR because at the end of the day, when we’ve got clients bidding for this business, only one is going to be successful and I’m going to have to go to the other ten and say ‘the reason why you were not successful is this, this and this – the same as you have to do with an unsuccessful member of staff. But I think sometimes, there is a danger of not having that little bit of flexibility. And if I’m interviewing for a higher post, I normally give them a little written test – you know, on your way out, there’s a series of questions I’d like you to answer – you know, there’s nothing right or wrong – they are deliberately portrayed scenarios – ‘how do you deal with this?’....and I say to them, there’s no right and no wrong, just fire at it! Umm so the reality is, the interview is finished when the face to face bit is done and I’ve got no problem with the scoring thing and you do need to score – and I think it helps to bring things back to your mind map and say oh, that person was good – but I just think that there needs to be flexibility that says if Tom Riddle scored 20 and Katie Bell scored 21 but Tom was actually the better person or better overall package and you need to have the flexibility to say well, what we will do is........but it’s one of those things, how do you statistically or theoretically define lateral thinking – it’s very difficult. And we should use the criteria that we have got and maybe there should be one at the end called suitability – and at the end of the day it’s a gut instinct – that’s why you have probation periods – is your gut instinct right? You’ve got three months, six months or whatever the probation period is – that’s why it is there. If it weren’t gut instinct, you wouldn’t need a probation period.......so in terms of your question, just to have the ability to recognise that the manager is making a managerial decision. (SMGHOUM2)

By luck! Yeah I think I do. I mean I go all through the procedures to the best of my ability, for example, I spend a lot of time preparing the person specs, job descriptions etc. etc. and some have turned out to be brilliant and some have turned out to be pretty bad. I’m not convinced I’ve yet hit upon a psychic recruitment mechanism......and that’s where I was coming from earlier.... It’s not that I don’t follow the procedures or don’t try to do it as accurately as possible, but people can...you know, you use all the usual things, presentations,
interviews, written things, you use all the indicators you can, references....but it's still not scientific because some people are very, very good at presenting themselves and the reality of themselves, is not the way they present themselves... and the opposite to that is also sometimes true. Some people just can not present themselves well, but they're excellent, very competent people and they just can not present themselves...I've got some of my staff that can't present themselves that I know are good....umm but they just can't do it. So there's an issue about whether we can make it any more scientific? - if we can. (SMGHOUM7)

Umm, well I think it's about the planning of what you want and getting that person spec right and the JD, and I think a lot of work has been done on that which I'm glad to see; so we don't have that old situation – we used to have the old JD's. I think first and foremost, doing that review when you've first got a vacancy – is that what you need? I think your starting point is....you don't just want to go out for more of the same....without checking that that's what you want.....so I think it's the starting at that point, the planning and reviewing of the JD, the person spec, the progression criteria, getting what assistance you can in terms of the recruitment side of it I suppose – and that they have some training in that. The 'Slughorn mantra' is 'if you're not sure, then don't appoint' – it's not easy to get rid of anyone during probation and it's something I try to say to my staff, however tough it is...I've made a few appointments where I've made terrible mistakes and it was awful, but I managed to... eventually... but.... (SMGHOUF9)

Serious scrutinisation of..... to start off with, always evaluating the job description. One example really was when it was advertised as it was previously, but then the way the department has evolved, there's a bit more too it in fact, than the post holder has done....so revising the job description. It could have been different and I think we would have had more of a broad spectrum yeah? so then following the review of the job description, it's very much taking a tight look at the person specification and passing it by a couple of people who are on the panel then, because they are very much part of it yeah? I don't think an interview is all about the questions necessarily. They are a useful path to go down, because it doesn't necessarily have to be 'ooh you can do your stuff and then you've got the job' – the way the job has got to be communicated is that you've got to be a team player – there's lots of different personalities in here and you know, I've got to be looking for the personality as well as the skills and that has come out a lot in the presentations that we've been doing with them. (SMGHOUF8)

Umm... I suppose it's a judgement isn't it? I mean at the start of the process you need a clearly defined job description about what the person is going to do.....the placing of the advert then – again, in an appropriate place and then drawing up a shortlist against whatever defined criteria....I mean it's just sort of following your standard sort of HR process in a sense. You know, trying to avoid bias at that stage, you know if there's any sort of subjectivity err, trying to avoid that, and then you'd run through the interview then, asking everybody the
same questions, asking for feedback and whatever, asking supplementary questions if you wanted to elaborate on a point and it’s sort of a case of judgement I guess and I mean in our line of work you’ve got to have the technical abilities – that’s key and you’ve also got to sort of have a view about how the individual would sort of fit into the department and be able to work with others, not only within the department but work with others outside of the department as well, so…..this is the sort of criteria that we sort of judge people by….we’ve never given anybody a test to do anything, like you say, it’s all been on the pointed questions on various aspects of the job and it seems to be with the exchequer staff, it’s not rocket science, but if somebody is saying they’ve put a system invoice in, or whatever, or they’ve acted as an invoice clerk and then you’re asking them questions that they can’t answer, I mean that sort of comes out hugely….it’s that sort of thing (SMGHOUM3).

Well, umm I think it’s something that’s quite difficult. I think the issue is, is that you get the best candidate that is available – you don’t always get the best candidate and sometimes you have to compromise – although you don’t want to have to do that obviously. But part of that of course is about err, about the process you undertake in the recruitment and selection – this is our bread and butter of course – it’s about making sure you have got an accurate job description, accurate person spec, that you actually use the right media at the right time to maximize the attention of the best candidates out there OK, and then that you’d follow through due process, because you want to keep good candidate’s interest, by going through the selection process quickly, appropriately, fairly, keeping their interest OK. But ultimately you might not get the right candidate and I think it’s important to….to when you are thinking through selection decision-making, that if you can, consider what you would accept as your benchmark. What would you accept – is it 75, is it 80 per cent, is it 50 per cent – what is that? So that you’ve got one or two candidates or may be more, that are appointable – that could meet your needs if the first or second candidates don’t do it. That’s what you’ve got to work out in practice (SMGHOUM6).

Right, well, we follow through the procedures obviously that UL has and in a way that makes it standard, it makes it fair and equal and everything, but it’s kind of arbitrary how you grade and score. I sat on one for Art & Design last week and sometimes it’s a bit close, because I did some sport ones and being an outsider….well we did agree and she did get appointed – I thought one was outstanding and they didn’t think so….they did know both of them, and people know of them because of their part time lecturing and things and yeah, but actually it’s often the devil you know is better than the devil you don’t know – as you know. So knowing them yeah? But we, we, I mean in Education – I’ve not done any appointments in Student Services – but in Education, because of it’s background and if someone is teaching in a school you generally know what they are like in schools. All of the responses we’ve had from the people we’ve interviewed have said that it was a worthwhile, it was a good day, they felt it valuable, you know….you’ve got to make sure you look after them, give them a good time – not a ‘good time’ but a good amount of time – and treat them
properly and make sure that they’ve got a feel that it’s been a worthwhile exercise, without rushing them in, ten minute interview – that’s no good. (SMGHOUM4)
RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION IMPROVEMENTS

Are there any parts of the recruitment process that you think should be improved and if so, what and how?

I’m fairly happy with the process. If I have any complaints, it’s about the budgetary side of things which limits where we can go in the market. If there’s any deficiency in the final outcomes then – we’ve talked about this before – we need to have presentations etc. If we had had suitable candidates for the Draco Malfoy job, then I would have definitely had a presentation as part of the recruitment and selection process. (SMGHOUM1)

I think that question needs to be asked of somebody who applied and perhaps didn’t get the job. I mean what I can reflect on, is my own experience which was very poor actually. I couldn’t get a straight answer from anyone. I mean maybe it should have put me off!...deeper interaction between the applicant and the organisation – first impressions – I know it sounds a bit clichéd but first impressions – getting the information that they want and feeling that they are being dealt with rationally. In my experience, I didn’t feel I was being, but I don’t know about others! It is important where you advertise but that can be sort of missing the point.....if you’re talking about academic staff then the critical thing is first of all the department, and secondly UL....and those sorts of things aren’t going to be changed by just simply.....they are actually about, you know, the reputation of the organisation and the sub-organisation i.e. the school, and those things are built up over time and OK, it does help if one has got....when Warwick University advertise.... I think some of these things....don’t get me wrong. I think the admin of the process is very important and if you get it wrong it is ridiculous, but there are lots of issues about perception and image and you can get the process right but they are not going to be fooled by the process being right – these are things that are created over time. (SMGHOUM5)

I don’t know, I really don’t.....this one is a tricky one.....if there was any research that showed me that after doing all that they were 100 % satisfied with their appointments, then I’d be more likely to say yeah, we need to spend that investment. I think we probably don’t spend enough investment in recruitment because at the end of the day people is what it is all about and if we want good people, we need to invest in order to get good people and we probably try to do recruitment on the cheap! Let me give you an example – I’ve got a very good recent one. We wanted to recruit a post in August and then we had to wait until there was an advert to go out and when it went out, two of my posts were merged into one post that didn’t exist...which then had to go out for re-advert which cost twice as much as the group advert – so I shouldn’t have waited in the first place....it was a false economy....so I think UL needs to invest more money in recruitment and I’m not saying that I want more budget and I’m not arguing about me and my unit, this is about UL. (SMGHOUM7)
I think we’re not as sharp as some organisations in making sure the references are properly screened. There was one that I was very glad to off-load, and I was on tender hooks because he was going to another place— one of my bad appointments— where I felt desperate and I had doubts and shouldn’t have done it, but and I was on tender hooks, because they would not appoint until they had all the references in— and they wouldn’t confirm his appointment and I just don’t think we are strong enough on that one. And looking at things like sickness records - and that doesn’t happen to my mind— rarely. Information that I’ve had to sort of shout a bit for, like who are the references – and I think they do that a bit now – we were taking so much away from the panel and why? I want to know and I want to question them— why didn’t you use your last employer as a reference? I think we ought to have very good reasons if they haven’t used their last employer. You know, that kind of screening – is that done on our behalf centrally? You have to kind of… I have to keep saying, why are we denying ourselves these tools? I just think, and I worry a little bit, we’ve just appointed somebody and I didn’t realize and I said it to Romilda Vane and she didn’t— it wasn’t raised with her or with me because both – it was a failure on both parts, because I looked at the probation and it was— argh, sorry, … but on this one it was a seven month probation and when I asked why, the manager said ‘oh because they are going to be here for two weeks and then go off for an operation for five weeks’— what!— I would have appointed after they had been off for their operation and brought in a casual until then. And I raised it with Romilda and it hadn’t been brought to her attention by HR and it hadn’t been brought to my attention – and that person had already rung HR and said is it OK for me to apply – which it is – but that information hadn’t been passed on— the person then brought it up at the interview – to her credit, and it might well be a very good appointment – but I’m thinking there’s something wrong in the process. We need to put a break in, that checks what we are doing. I think it goes through too much without some breaks to make sure— because once they’re there, you can’t do anything and I just don’t think there’s enough— it’s hard… why didn’t my staff bring it to my attention, why didn’t Romilda’s bring it to hers? Because I think we were off our mind on that one, starting them straight away and then on a month’s full pay sick— knowingly! And I can’t get any vacancy cover, so what I’ve ended up with – and it’s not that I’m not being compassionate, she’s not my problem yet, she doesn’t work for me – well she does now — I won’t have a service for our customers because I wouldn’t be… now I haven’t got the money for it— so what’s going on? It’s that kind of thing… so sorry, it’s a bit low level, but it’s practical. And I also think the scrutiny of the contracts – they are very much standard and so many of ours are non-standard. So I think that attention to that, – making sure that they are looking, so that we don’t end up with…. (SMGHOUF9)

Sometimes I think we need a bit of flexibility in terms of filling the vacancies yeah? We’ve just had a directive that says that once somebody has left, you won’t automatically get someone to fill that, unless you really sort of beg, borrow, get on your knees and grovel yeah? I think there needs to be more of an appreciation of the needs of that, because I had what was very much a stressful time for me, with a web officer. When you’ve got a sort of…. the UL
priorities were to get the website for example back on track... then at the staffing meeting where I put forward the case for the vacancy to be filled, because of the urgency of the situation - and it’s not just a tick in the box! Like the staffing apps— I can understand the need for the staffing apps meetings and everything but I think there’s a need for better communication – with the department to say well OK, why has SMGHOUF8 put that down? (SMGHOUF8)

Well from a...with my finance hat on... from that point of view, I’m quite happy with the process, I mean you’ve got the staffing apps and you’ve got a review of whether the job is needed – I mean this is coming back to the point I was making earlier, we’ve been doing it for 20 years and nobody actually stops to ask, do we still need to do it or whatever, so I think the staffing apps – from a financial and operational point of view – is a very good process, so that those questions are asked every time a vacancy comes up. I mean some of those questions should be asked even when we haven’t got a vacancy, you know, as a review of what the departments or units are doing anyway. But umm, from a departmental point of view, I could understand managers saying well, I’ve got key members of staff and the staffing apps process is still very vague you know, a member of staff resigns and I could fill in the form or whatever, requesting a replacement and by the time that form is dealt with, invariably the member of staff is gone, so there’s never going to be any handover to start with and it’s just how quickly we can make an appointment so that you know, the gap is so...I can imagine that that would be an issue. I mean we have that sort of issue ourselves, you know with the processing, it’s a process – you know we’ve got whatever it is – a thousand invoices a month to process and we have three people to do that. If you’ve only got two, well then they have to work doubly hard to cover all the invoices and then the process slips... so you’ve got your financial saving, but you haven’t got your operation at it’s optimum in that sense - and it’s the same - well even more so with the lecturers isn’t it? I mean, if you’ve got students that you are teaching on that day, you know they’ve got to be taught and so you have to get your people into place. Absolutely. So as I say, two different views and I don’t have a problem from a financial or an operational point of view, because I do think that as vacancies come up, we should be reviewing them, sort of constantly reviewing them, to make sure that it is appropriate to replace. And I think from the number of applications that are refused, the staffing apps panel is taking that view and looking to do things differently with a view to making the organisation as efficient as possible, but in cases where you do quite clearly need to replace the person, then it needs to be done with more speed I would suggest, otherwise, it can lead to problems. (SMGHOUM3)

It’s a process that needs a complete overhaul. It’s not a very user friendly process for customers i.e. managers using it. It is necessarily very process bound because one of the fundamentals is in terms of equality in relation to recruitment, but it doesn’t allow a lot of flexibility in terms of our approaches to resourcing rather than recruitment – it’s a wider debate really – it’s resourcing,

8 Staffing Application process where a panel of senior managers scrutinise and either approve/disapprove requests for staffing.
as opposed to simply recruitment through usual methods. Because that would include use of agency staff, consultants, it would include the use of short term placements, secondments – umm all the sorts of different varieties of things we would discuss here in HR – what about bringing somebody in as a student placement as a gap year student to Advanced Potion Making? – That would be a good resourcing option. Now we don’t articulate that very well in the current process we’ve got and we are undertaking a process review this year to look at that. So not only in terms of the guidance we give, in terms of resourcing options as a strategy, but also in terms of the forms we use to score. Our scoring methodology is clumsy – it doesn’t help managers out there in their decision making. It doesn’t help what I’ve just said about establishing a benchmark – what’s your pass rate? We don’t say that in our form. I say it when I give advice, now we know we’ve got to do that. So we need to give a far more comprehensive set of guidelines, but we also need to give more options for managers – with safeguards to make sure they can actually get a more flexible approach to resourcing (SMGHOUM6).

References are a problem. I’d much rather have the references at the interview and we rarely do – although some now are so bland that they’re not worth the …..I believe in total openness. And I think you’ve got to be honest in what you write and if there’s a problem, you write there’s a problem. You don’t write this is a wonderful person to get rid of them…it’s dishonest and I’ve no objection to anybody seeing any reference – it can be open, the candidate can see it and it’s just an honest opinion and if you think somebody is not very efficient then I think they should see that and they should know that. They should know that’s your view of them – what’s the problem? They might, you know, not like it, but you know….if I’d stepped out of line or wasn’t very good at something, I’d probably know it anyway…you know…otherwise it seems to work quite well. (SMGHOUM4).
RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

In terms of recruitment, how do you ensure that you get the best candidates for your school, rather than the second best?

In terms of recruiting students, it’s about marketing and selling our product to attract the best and most capable students. We have school based open days - 14 last year - and invite over 1000 students. The basic rule is that if you don’t attend an open day we won’t make you an offer. We figure that if potential students do not attend our open days, then UL has not figured in their top three choices. As a school, we also set high levels of achievement in relation to recruitment of students, so we ask for at least two B’s or better. Psychologically, students think oh god this must be a really good course. If we offered a few C’s and D’s, students would feel that the course did not hold any value i.e. anyone can get onto this course. We ensure that on open days etc we have the best presenters up front. We also have current students showing prospective students around which means that the prospective students get first hand information. This of course means that we need to ensure our current students feel they are getting a good deal and fee they are valued – it’s word of mouth. Another aspect of the marketing and selling is the value added aspect of coming to UL e.g. the extra curriculum sports activities and social life within Llareggb as a buzzing City centre. The total student experience is very important and during an open day less than 20% of questions relate to academic life, but focus on value added issues such as how many soccer teams are there? How easy is it to get to town? We rely on strong messages from past students in terms of passing on the value added aspect. We are only as good as our last game and it’s no good saying ‘we used to be this, or we used to do that’. Physical facilities also attract both students and staff. When people see NIAC, they now say where do I sign?! This was not the case in the past and potential staff and students used to go to Loughborough etc. The same things are also used to attract staff such as Academic Teachers or Sports Coaches. We’ve increased out student numbers over the last ten years from 250 to 1250 so we’ve had to recruit more staff, although we are currently not quite at the recommended staff to student ratio. We struggle to recruit researchers though. Ideally you would want to attract those from a 4 or 5* rated institution and then get them to come to a 3* unit with potential for growth! In order to do that, you need the flexibility to bend the rules a bit, for example, providing a good salary package with no teaching. We tend to find that applicants are either disenchanted with their current circumstances or are playing out their swan song. (SMGHOSM12)

What we do, is myself and others – and in particular for an academic programme - is we talk with the programme leader to say what do we want? And often, what we have done in the past is that we have a person in mind and we’ve sort of head hunted people for certain jobs, and then we’ve made sure

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9 National Indoor Athletics Centre
that the job description and the key competencies actually fit that person – I
know I shouldn’t be saying this to you! – but we’ve done that and you’re not
telling me that that doesn’t happen in industry. But what we have sort of always
done is a detailed job description and sort of talked about what we want, talked
about the way in which that person would fit into the overall needs of the school
or the academic department or the project and tried to think not only of the
immediate, but also of where that person could grow into something else and
put those down as essential and desirable. And we interview. And I think we’ve
got a good panel and we all ask fairly probing questions in different ways and
we have a feel between the three of us of the type of person we want and very
quickly, as you go through an interview, you say ‘well what do you think?’ And
it’s not so much that they’ve got the skills or the knowledge or understanding,
it’s will they fit? Are they the right person for this organisation, this culture, this
school? So it’s a combination of things – and if we don’t get that person first
time round then we go back out to interview again as soon as we can.
(SMGHOSM10)

Under the UL processes I don’t think we do enough job analysis and we also
need a lot more support in putting together the person specification, especially
on the academic side of things. So I mean, I think there is a whole kind of raft
of human resource practice that could be bottomed out and shared around – do
you know what I mean? (SMGHOSF17)

Part of the job is probably already done for us in terms of reputation. With staff
obviously, I think advertising is another key one and I think it is important to
publicise so that if there are obviously people who feel that their contribution to
the school puts them in a good position it’s particularly important that they are
aware that the post is arising. It doesn’t give them an advantage in an interview
situation or whatever – it’s quite simply raising their awareness. How do we
make sure we get the best? Well very often, and particularly in terms
of…fortunately lots of practitioners out there are known to us because we’re
such a large organisation and that’s the way good practice is….I mean
obviously it only affects us across Wales and then that’s a disadvantage.
(SMGHOSM11)

We don’t always and particularly because we recruit from the profession, and it
was particularly difficult around the time that Professor Trelawney was here –
not because of her specifically, but because we were very much trying to
reduce our staffing costs and it was very difficult to recruit above lecturer level
and that meant we couldn’t get people, because they were all earning so much
more working in the health profession. So it’s an issue for the whole of the
health profession, not just UL, but across the UK. But you have to have health
professionals training health professionals and when they are there they can
earn more and get a lot more flexible benefits and things. (SMGHOSF16)

I think that I’ve particularly failed to do that once or twice – but probably not as
many times as my predecessor. There are more old problems in this school
than new ones. I mean I’m not a personnel specialist, I have recruited people,
but that was a long time ago – I mean I suppose I find the process helpful you know. The place where we get difficulties and I have learned the lesson now, is where you’ve got two strongly held views in favour of one candidate or another candidate but both people would accept a third candidate as second choice. And that has happened in this school and if I’ve anything to say about it, it won’t happen again – it does not give you a happy answer and then that’s the trouble – you may well be taking the opinion of two well qualified specialists and you are not a specialist…I mean I have to say I have done that and I remember doing it as some of the very first set of interviews we had when I was HOS. Madame Bones and I were violently at disagreement over a set of candidates…my choice was X and her choice was Y was what it came down to and neither of us would budge and Sirius Black who was the Chair, said ‘well I’m the Chair so I’m going to have to back the HOS, so obviously I will go with him’…I don’t quite know if I agree with that as an argument!? Well no, you know, we don’t tend to do the scores business – there are lots of people that do, but basically it’s I scored one person best and you scored another person best, Sirius basically scored them both the same but said well I’m going to go with the HOS and improve the status quo…I was not at all happy about winning the argument on that basis I have to say, but there you go! (SMGHOSM14)

I think first of all we need to advertise in the right journals, and then the short listing is very important. After that, we have a panel who are part of the presentation and formal interview. I think that the importance of specialist advertising needs to be better understood. Because we always end up having to go back to re-advertise therefore that causes a delay and delays are expensive. When we couldn’t appoint to the course director, we had to drop in Neville Longbottom and then the course didn’t recruit well and we were down to the tune of £80, 000, so in terms of recruiting the right person, you know, again it’s about results – we’ve saved a couple of quid in the first instance through not advertising in the right place, but haven’t appointed as a result. (SMGHOSM13)

Well, there are different stages. First, when we short list we look at their CV. I mean we had, we had...we recruited two members of staff recently. First we make sure that the advert will go in the right place and I also sent an e-mail to all the people that I know at other universities, who supervise PhD students that have recently finished and are looking for a job, so advertisement. And then when we look at the CV - we compare the job description and the essentials with their CV, with the skills of the person, and of course during the interview and then afterwards with the referees. (SMGHOSM15)
RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION IMPROVEMENTS

Are there any parts of the recruitment process that you think should be improved and, if so, what and how?

I think the R&S scoring systems could be improved in terms of short listing. You need to be able to clearly differentiate between candidates, which you can’t do using a one or zero scoring process. It would be better to have something like zero – not demonstrated, one – demonstrated slightly, two – demonstrated well, three – demonstrated fully. The work that has been done around differentiating between Lecturer and Senior Lecturer has been helpful though. We tend to get candidates to present to other staff so we can assess their content knowledge. So most staff undergo presentations as well as interviews. (SMGHOSM12)

I think the way in which we advertise jobs is very boring – you look at the Times Higher or the Education Guardian – the way in which we advertise the posts doesn’t set the world alight – it’s very old hat! You look at one or two different institutions or companies and the advert will hit you and immediately it will begin to create an impression about the organisation and the impression you get about UL is ….? What I don’t understand is that we do all this jazzy stuff on marketing with the ‘UL effect’, but we never take that ‘UL effect’ to say hey! Lecturers or Administrators come on into UL. And that takes me back to issues about what is our corporate strategy on marketing? Any time we go out there to the public – whoever the public are – and I think our first impression in terms of the marketing advert is crap. And I think they have to do a presentation and I say why? People get very nervous doing presentations, I’d much rather….I know it demonstrates people’s capabilities to stand up in front of people - if we’re talking about a basic lecturers job - and manage PowerPoint - but I’d much rather get to know them in more detail and I think there might be other ways in which we could ascertain professional competencies linked to lecturing, do you know what I mean? Q – So how would you do that? I knew you would ask me that and I don’t know! It might be sort of…..well, I know when I went for a Deans job in Azkaban about six years ago, they put the six candidates all in together, and there was a round of questions which we all had an opportunity to respond to and then there was one or two scenarios where we were in pairs or in threes….and that takes a lot of time I know, but I sometimes think you could question the need for asking good lecturers the need to demonstrate they can lecture. In a way, I’m sort of saying that that should be a given… or they could provide us with some evidence? We could say to them provide us with a video of a lecture you have given recently – if we are into learning and teaching and observation as an organisation , we say ‘have you got a recent video or PowerPoint presentation that you could send to us in advance, of the stuff you’ve done?’ or an example of how you design a session for a small group – and that would be interesting because if they say no, you would think Mmmmm… - they may not be the people that we want – but other things that I’ve experienced, are for example, where they have done personality testing
and things like that, and again I’ve been put in scenarios – ‘let me describe this situation to you, what if?’……and that way you get to feel a greater depth of critical thinking and evaluation between yourself and the possible candidates. But it’s not always possible when you are rolling it out in a day, you simply haven’t the time. So you have to think about the whole day and how much you meet them as individuals. So we might want to give some more thought to the process, but the obvious thing, is about attracting good people and I don’t think our advert shouts out ‘this is a great place to be, come and work for us!’

(SMGHOSM10)

I think job analysis and the person specification for definite. I mean I think that, I think that if people do the things that are required of them, then….so I mean I think that the Chair of the Panel training is a good thing – it’s defined as being compulsory for all Chairs and so you should get a good outcome and I think the quality bit, is about how you write good job descriptions and person specs, personally. I think we need a load of HR training for people around the place, I mean across the whole institution really. (SMGHOSF17)

I think the biggest advantage is not having to have anyone from EMG Chairing. It really has made a big difference in terms of not delaying. I didn’t have any criticism of EMG members chairing interviews when it happened, it was just that there were too few of them and too many interviews! (SMGHOSF16)

I think we should re-start going to press for all appointments. I think it’s a nonsense saving it up to make one or two wrong appointments….so press I would say because press gets a more…matching set of cutlery at the end if you like. eBay as a way to do it – you may well do it for £1.99 if you’re lucky….mind you I did make a big eBay purchase once and it was rubbish - £250 quid down the drain basically – yes, really upsetting that, umm but I think that would be my strongest thing. (SMGHOSM14)

I think the recruitment and selection process can be ineffective especially in terms of students. The marketing to students was excruciatingly painful, so why am I paying that amount of the top slice? So the top slice is again, too blunt. If UL is serious about recruiting through a marketing and communications campaign that is…..you know I got sent a very nice young girl and I was told that she was my link person, and I came over and she was weirdly nervous when she came to meet me, so I asked her what she knew about the school…and I just felt that I wasn’t being served at all and I’d much rather have her salary, than a prospectus with cartoon characters on the cover of the prospectus which was absolutely diabolical. So I raised this in a senior management meeting, not to claw back the salary, but to say well, in terms of my students, sub south park images put on the cover of a magazine - trying to promote art that we believe in….it actually hurts us, it doesn’t support us. You know again, it comes back to…and it’s the same issue with jobs.ac.uk, it’s the inappropriateness of centralizing….what would you call it? ..... an initiative or whatever...without understanding the complexities. My students are so different, of course they are. And what we’ve got to do is promote accordingly,
so again we come back to the idea of student targets, and a recruitment target generally would have been easier if the website….. a) you could navigate it and b) most kids now, just aren't interested. (SMGHOSM13)

It’s different for different jobs, but for academics in some universities they have to do a presentation in front of people. They invite the whole school to these presentations. I think that’s very useful for academics, but for researchers….? Well the same should apply for researchers as well, but for administrators for example, for administrators, if we ask them to do some typing, or we ask them to take notes of the meeting – so some small exercises. For technicians we ask them to do some practical, or we ask them what is their view on some practical issues – so umm, it depends on the job itself I think. I think on senior management some universities do a personality test. I think in this place, the appointment procedure for directors is a bit complicated. We ask them to do a presentation to the school and then there is a voting and I think that an interview would be probably better than a presentation to the school – and that applies also to the HOS. (SMGHOSM15)
INDUCTION

Can you describe the Induction processes you currently have in place to ensure that new members of staffing your unit are fully aware of your own and UL's expectations in terms of performance?

We use the corporate induction pack and point them to that, but as well as that, I’ve also developed a fairly extensive list. I also appoint a responsible person for the induction of a person and say this is what you have to cover starting with workplace assessment, like people you need to see, procedures they need to know, financial regulations, Agresso, Health and Safety – and it is set out over a period so you’ve got day one, week one, week two etc. over a three month period and the induction gradually expands in it’s complexity if you like. I also interview the new person myself after a couple of weeks to make sure things have been covered and to find out if there is anything they need. (SMGHOUM1)

In terms of induction, well it depends doesn’t it, but it’s done piecemeal as it were, giving them things to do - with the background information – sort of here’s the task and then obviously evaluate. Another thing we did, or I did, was allocate a project – sometimes with me present and sometimes with me not present so that they could talk around the thing and the function. I’d say it was pretty formally done actually. It was off with the old job and turn on the new job as a manger. You can’t just leave somebody on their own, but it’s got to move pretty quickly into something practical, although there has got to be an aspect of reading i.e. it’s like doing a module. (SMGHOUM5)

Umm haphazard I think would be the word I’d use! (SMGHOUM2)

Well I can tell you what our induction programme is all about, but I’m not sure it relates that much to performance, because elements of that have just been covered in recruitment… and management meetings that would take place after induction would go into performance so….I’m not sure that induction is that much about performance…certainly we don’t treat it that way, now maybe that’s wrong I don’t know? I mean we treat induction to try and make the person fit in and know about the systems they need to use, in order to operate at whatever performance level…hopefully at a good performance level. But if you can’t operate, you can’t do anything…so the induction programme we have is - we’ve got a generic one that runs across L&IS with a checklist - we allocate someone to show them all those things, show them where the toilets are, take map of the campus that they are on, take map of how to get to where they need to be…all of that kind of stuff, but we don’t really look at ‘this is what you need to do in terms of performance’. We do take them through – I think – the staff review and development but I don’t think we see it as a performance enhancing function, we see it more as a getting up to speed of operating function. (SMGHOUM7)

Well we do have a sort of proforma which we ask the line managers….who have adapted…. and some of them are really excellent, but they all do it and we
have a form – of which I could give you a copy – do you want a copy? So that includes the familiarisation and what they do. Sort of in Ron Weasley’s area then, they have this sort of self assessment of all the key skills that they will need and then at the end of the five months, they actually complete all that as well as the familiarisation. But umm… I think it’s a reasonably healthy local induction… they've broadened it a little bit in my technical services, where they’ve started to meet over lunch, like they just have a sandwich you see and I went up and met them and that and I quite like that, but it’s almost impossible in catering, with people starting and finishing and what have you in terms of that, but they’ve all got induction processes in place which identify the key things they’ve got to cover, and Ginny Weasley, centrally, monitors that they send a form in to say that there has been an induction plan…you know…..she has to make sure they are returning them but it’s re-assuring when she does it, to see that they are doing it - the paperwork sometimes lags, but we have a system that we have developed ourselves of actually saying, you write out a programme, sign off that they have done it and you send a copy in here to Ginny so that she can monitor. Generally someone is toddling them around…showing them around, so it does happen, it does happen. (SMGHOUF9)

The person that starts with us would have a one to one, you know, what they have to do, what’s expected of them. Before, we used to send them on a corporate induction but we don’t do that any more, so we’ve done our own little thing based around our own services – our own workplace induction – so someone would take them out and show them around and then they would speak to each member or each team, so that they understand their roles. (SMGHOUF8)

Umm right, that’s probably something we are a little bit weak in. I think we are now looking to have some more formal induction processes – that was something that came out of our liP review, but we haven’t had any new staff for a while now. I’m not sure when the last new member of staff was, so this is something that we would perhaps look to do a little bit differently, having had like I say, an liP view or consideration on this, but I mean as a basic principle, we would look to welcome the member of staff into the department and as a standard they would be taken around and introduced to everybody in the department to start with and sort of made to feel at home and made to feel welcome. I mean that’s an important part to umm – not to sort of get carried away with it – but I mean it is like a sort of team approach and everybody needs to feel welcome in a friendly environment – and like I said, that would be a key part and we do that with everybody – and we always have done that and everybody is introduced – certainly to their immediate colleagues that they are going to be working with and like I say, either at the same time or very shortly afterwards, they are introduced to everyone in the department from kind of Professor Slughorn downwards. So welcoming them to the department would be important and following on from that, it’s got to be showing them what they’ve got to do. I keep using the examples of the processing jobs because they are the easiest examples, but as a run through, someone from invoicing
comes in and are shown these are the stages that you go through when the invoice comes in and these are the files – because they need to know – even if they have got previous experience – which they all should have in that type of role, when they come to us – using the finance system that we’ve currently got is going to be slightly different from the ones they have used before and so they are shown the sort of technical aspects of the job and that is explained to them and somebody sort of sits with them – one of the girls will sit with the newcomer, or whatever and take them through it and will be available you know, to answer the questions and so forth, that they may have in their first couple of days. And we keep an eye on them until we are quite comfortable that they have got it right and they are comfortable with what they are doing. OK, so making sure they are welcome and making sure they know what they have to do and how they’ve got to do it and that would be the start to the process then. (SMGHOUM3)

Well, we have a wonderful corporate induction package! Both through CD-ROM and hard copy, we have a wonderful process for managers to follow in terms of using that. I am concerned that it’s not always used properly or effectively. So yes, the process is in place, the guidelines are in place, the activity does take place, but….within HR I’d like to think that we do it reasonably well – I know in practice, recently we haven’t done it very well at all! - but I think that’s a blip rather than anything else OK. So I’m comfortable with that. (SMGHOUM6)

I’ll have to go back to Education for this, because we haven’t had any new staff in Student Services. They have the Corporate Induction and I’m glad that’s going to be re-instated as face to face, as well as the video and pack. We would err – well we certainly did in Education and I’d do it for Student Services as well - prepare another pack of materials, a meeting, go through them, talk to people, go through, you know….I did with Education, met them all together – half a day or what ever – this is what the school is all about and give them a pack with sort of health and safety lists, all the sorts of information…what I wanted to try and develop is an actual staff handbook like we had in most schools…and I never got around to it…..I was going to do that, put them all together…all the things, I’ve got them somewhere – probably down there, where the pack and materials that I used are. So a pack of things and not just giving it to them but actually having a session, question and answer. Mentoring…every new member of staff had a mentor, and that’s on-going in a way not just a one off session. (SMGHOUM4)
INDUCTION IMPROVEMENTS

Are there any parts of the induction process you think should be improved and, if so, what and how?

Continuous improvement – we can always find ways to improve. There are some things that you can control and things you can't, for example, Dobby started and was immediately plunged into the summer programme which was not ideal – we didn’t have the time to sit back and cover all the things we should have, but we recognise that and now that the summer is over, we will pick up those things that were missing – that's circumstances – but I’m sure that we can always do things better. I think there is a place for corporate induction and it’s like Health and Safety and everything else – the responsibility, is with the departmental head or manager. If you don’t get that ownership then you won’t get people turning up. So they have got to own it…..we have got to own it. I think the corporate pack of information is useful – whether there needs to be a quick session from the centre I’m not sure – what I try to do, is to identify who they need to see – not just anybody - and if a Head of School was involved, I would normally go along with the person to introduce them. It takes the quality system right through – we ask our contractors to sign to say they have read and understood our Health and Safety Policy, so why not staff?! (SMGHOUM1)

You've got the formal things, you know, ‘do you know where the fire escapes are?’ - the usual sort of statutory stuff. I think where we go wrong is that in a lot of inductions, people end up with a checklist, which is fine, and there should be a checklist, but I think the danger is….we all have a limit or a capacity to take on new things and I think the one danger with the checklist is that it is very tempting...OK, you welcome your new member of staff and you go through this, you fire through about fifty things and he doesn't have a hope in hell of remembering half of them if it's done too quickly – it needs to be broken into chunks and manageable chunks and make them relevant. I mean you don’t need training on Agresso during the first couple of weeks to understand how the procurement process works, or the finance process. You know you could sit down straight away and say, this is Agresso and they wouldn’t understand, because it’s been shown to them in a vacuum and until they have some mental hooks to hang things on, it won’t make sense. There needs to be more of ‘have you done this?’ but with the recognition that there should be small chunks, in a sequence, with time in between for the person to be able to build in their own map of where they sit in the organisation and what the various things do and how things like Agresso for example fits in. Tying these things together. (SMGHOUM2)

In terms of Corporate Induction, I think the organisation should be at least welcoming…..and sending someone a CD I don’t think is welcoming! It’s back to this people management thing isn’t it? - the people skills side of things – I’m all for it being an addition to, but not instead of. I’m all for handing them information, whether it’s on a CD or on the intranet, or whatever. The issue for me is that kind of information should be available to all staff, not just induction
staff, because on top of the world changing. - I’ve been here for almost twenty years – who updates me in terms of where UL is? Maybe I need a bit of induction!.....I try to keep updated all the time but I don’t always have the opportunity – for example, how many people know now, what the structure of Registry is?...And don’t you think that’s problematic for the organisation? So maybe all that information should be made available to everyone and maybe now and again all managers should be updated. So induction shouldn’t be just thought of as an induction to UL, but maybe a major update on UL every five to ten years or something? – Because I’ve never had that – In fact I’ve never had an induction! It comes back to plugging into the organisation and I can only plug into the organisation if I know the structure and operation of the organisation. If it is changing and I don’t know what those changes are, because they often happen in isolation – OK, we’re getting a big re-structure now with lots of papers. I can read the papers and work out what the changes are – but the Registry – and I chose that as an example because that’s changed maybe three or four times over the last three or four years – and there’s not a paper that says there’s the structure – so I’m a manager and how do I plug into Registry and how do they plug into me? Because I don’t know how they are set up and I don’t know who I should be talking to about particular things and I need to, if that communication is going to be effective. Well an up to date structure of the organisation should be available to all staff, so that if I’ve got a problem, I go to this structure and say right, that’s who I’ve got to go and see in order to solve this problem. (SMGHOUM7)

I know there is the induction pack, but does HR issue them to new members of staff? I think it’s a bit of a grey area. It’s all very well, I mean I can do as much as possible here with the familiarization of the office, set the initial objectives to get the person up and running, but I think the wider issue like with umm some staff, is that they need an awful lot of information because they are enquiries people for UL – but for a lot of information, I’ve been sort of pointing them in the right direction because that was the imperative because they had to know that really quickly – but for other people, for example the market research officers – they’re sort of out there and there’s actually information on there but the time factor.....well you need a bit of a snapshot – something that’s on the web or something sort of ‘welcome to UL, here’s some key facts you need to know’ and perhaps that way, you now, when a new member of staff joins us they get their ID and staff number or what ever – that could be a quick link to the information behind.....bring back Corporate Induction! You can use an electronic format but there’s nothing better than having the people presence with someone with 10 – 15 other people who are all new to UL, all in one place – and I think there’s a lot to be said for that. We are a bit inclined to go too far down the electronic route and then you loose the personal touch. The other area where corporate induction fell down though, was that there would be no....if I had somebody starting next week, then there would be no more places until say January, by which time there would be no point in the person going. (SMGHOUF8)

Well on an individual basis, I think we need to be a little bit more...improve our induction so that we do all that properly at a local level and then proper job
descriptions – which we’ve got – but the system and process notes…I’m not sure that they are all that they could be on the local level for the different jobs, so that’s something that we’re looking to have in mind. (SMGHOUM3)

As you well know, one of the things we have been recently discussing is whether or not induction is complete without having a Corporate Induction, which involves meeting other people within the organisation and I think that probably is a gap. As you know we used to do it, but I think that was too much...too much and too late in a way, but I think there’s also a danger of doing too little and too soon and I think if we can find some sort of balance given our turnover. We haven’t got the turnover to support a monthly session for example, a standing session – you just can do it, there’s no point, you’d have two people there you know! – it’s pointless, so we’ve got to think that through in terms of what we need to do. But there is something about the corporacy of the organisation that we need to emphasise. We’re not very corporate – we’re quite split in a way because of the sites and because of the sort of business we are in, stratified within the school structures, and that would help that..... probably. (SMGHOUM6)
INDUCTION

Can you describe the induction processes you currently have in place to ensure that new members of staff in your school are fully aware of your own and UL’s expectations in terms of performance?

Induction is a phased process and we have a buddy system in place to support the new member of staff. If a new member of staff is part of a team, then the team will manage the induction process. I will usually - along with my Director of Learning & Teaching - see new staff within a month of them starting to discuss things like training, learning and assessment strategies. I also hold an open meeting for all staff to discuss school/UL issues. (SMGHOSM12)

Yeah, what we have is a little induction, a couple of pages about the way it is around here, what we deliver and who are the people, for example local sort of team clusters, academic clusters, professional clusters. I, then, would make sure that they’ve got the room they want and that we’ve provided them with all the basic amenities, then what we do is we take them through - especially if they are from external organisations - all the ICT stuff so that they feel confident to key into the centre through an electronic system. Then what I’ll do is take them round and show them to all colleagues and I’ll have a little chat with them. I’ll then sit them down for half an hour or more, to make sure they have the information they need and then after about two to three weeks in, we’ll have a little follow up interview – is everything OK? Are there things you’re still not sure of that we need to help you with? – And they are often more procedural things like knowing how you order something or use systems. And we are a sort of open door, so if it’s about ICT we will push them in the direction of x and if it’s about ordering something we will push them towards y and if it’s anything else or personal, they’ll talk to me or Professor Umbridge. Q- What about their actual job role? Well, what we would have done there, is that at interview and then following on from interview we clarify – that’s the first sort of 45 minutes to an hour and if they are a new member of staff it would be clarified – well this is your time table and checking that with the head of the section / programme and then they come back to us and we talk about their needs in the Staff Development and Review. And they might say everything’s great and they might say ‘well no, I’m doing a hell of a lot of teaching in this semester, could that be balanced out a bit more, I want to be able to do research etc’? We would have talked about that at interview so we would know exactly what we want from the person and they would know what they want from us. So very quickly, after a couple of weeks, I would tend to just drop in and say, is everything OK? Teaching all right? Structured research, support? etc. (SMGHOSM10)

Umm, yes, I could give you a list that we use, so that we know what we are doing. And we ascribe people a mentor… and we are doing it. And I would meet with them personally early on in the process and all those sorts of things really. (SMGHOSF17)
Right, I meet with them for two or three hours and talk through the background of the school or what developments are underway and then I talk to them about line management procedures, you know, where they go to and I'll allocate each of them a mentor, but also this year – well for the last two years now, I show them around all the rooms and in some ways what I can bring to that, which support units can't, is the application on the ground because I know that when I teach, you know, this is what I do and good tips over and above the sort of plug it in and do this sort of thing….things like seminar presentations, using interactive whiteboards, things like err summing up at the end, using flip charts and not just writing on a flip chart but getting one of the group to sit at the computer and turn it into a PowerPoint and then pop it up on Blackboard so that effectively you have what it is you have undertaken as a whole group, so that they can then look back on it again - so that it hasn't just disappeared on the flip chart again or whatever. But it's that sort of side, you know it's the teaching and learning application of what it is sort of over and above – it's a fuller induction rather than a nuts and bolts induction. (SMGHOSM11)

We use your book! And all the Heads of Centre do it and so do the staff in the centres and they all use the book. They've all got a copy and they think it's very useful. And then of course there's the informal induction where people get to show you around…but I think that book's incredible, it's really made a big difference. What would happen before was that there were always gaps and of course what the book does with its checklist, is to stop you having any gaps. (SMGHOSF16)

OK, it's pretty unstructured but they do get to have a chat and the length of it rather depends on the person. There are some people who would happily spend all morning with you and some people who are quite happy just to get on with it, in which case you say, if there are no questions then there's the lavatory and there's the canteen…..Most of our stuff like the schools plans, we do the same as Personnel do and we put it on the web! We've got all our own documents there which include documents from the management and planning team, minutes, lots of strategies, stuff like that, so that by and large I would think that a new member of staff gets to know what's going on. (SMGHOSM14)

Yes and err funnily enough, I'm doing a staff induction tomorrow afternoon and I've booked an hour or whatever it is and what I've been doing with Parvati is documentation, procedures and in terms of the Corporate Induction…is that being sent out now to all…because I've never had an induction! I suppose one could argue that I was inducted through fire… but I've been going through it all with Parvati and we've got two other members of staff. (SMGHOSM13)

Well I think it starts at the interview, so at the interview, we will spend about an hour talking about where they would be expected to work and what are the different departments etc., the workload, the lab, all of these things. Now when they are selected, we would then invite them again, before they sign the contract, we invite them to have a chat and talk about the job, about the subject they're going to teach, the workload, what facilities we can offer them,
computing at home and then when they sign the contract, I take them and introduce them to other members of staff and I send an email with their CV – well, a brief introduction of their experience to all staff and wish them good luck. And we’ve got an induction package, I think it’s from the human resources and we give them that. And in the first two weeks, I meet with them almost daily, to see how they are getting on and if they’ve got all the information they need. For the two people that we just appointed, I asked two experienced members of staff to be their mentors. (SMGHOSM15)
INDUCTION IMPROVEMENTS

Are there any parts of the induction process you think should be improved and, if so, what and how?

I think any Corporate Induction should be held earlier rather than later, it’s no good having it nine months after. I also think it is important that inductions are not overly full of information, or it can all be too much and staff switch off. (SMGHOSM12)

I think until recently, the central induction – it seems to be better – but it used to be very ad hoc and the link between the school and the centre with systems etc. was not made hugely clear. I think Dobby’s experience was that he was supposed to have two or three sessions and one got cancelled, so you know…we do what we do and we also walk people around the campus so that they are familiar with their environment and who they need to meet and know, and I think that the centre do that, but I think that one of the vagaries is the fact that we work across four campuses and that’s sometimes quite difficult to get a handle on and do as effectively as it could be. I also think that one of the things we don’t do, is that we get very insular, - ‘sucked inward’. I mean you know what it was like at Gregynog and there, a lot of people were saying hey this was good, why don’t we do this more often? We had the academic re-structure debate and I said at the end, that one of the secrets of managing change effectively is open and honest, transparent communication and Professor Sprout turned around and said ‘oh, so you want more hugs?’ and I said, ‘no, it’s not about wanting more hugs – it’s about having less structured, informal…’ when do we ever have informal opportunities for discussion? When do level three ever meet with level two and one in a brainstorming way outside of Learning and Teaching or Academic Board – never! So how do we share ideas? How do we innovate? And then you take that down a level and say, when does an academic member of staff in a school ever get the opportunity, – other than formal situations, or contrived situations like the Learning and Teaching Conference, or whatever, – get an opportunity to talk with people in Art? Because there must be potential there and then the learning organisation thing is not then happening…..because the structures – either informal or formal – are not there to allow that to happen. (SMGHOSM10)

Well, it would be nice to know where the Corporate Induction had gone these days – bring back the UL Corporate Induction! I think there is an issue about, about….I mean in theory if you’ve got the right person specification for the job and the labour market is good out there, so you get a good set of candidates, so that you can you know, it should be easy and the induction process is about getting to know what, how UL works – and it’s not about umm teaching them how to do the job, that should have been up front in part of the recruitment process. But quite often, there aren’t that many candidates out there to choose from and then you have to start to sort of compromise. And as soon as you start to compromise, the UL systems in relation to umm…so you have to look for local solutions because you can have quite a lot of underperformance out
there and sort of not doing the things that are expected, so I think we should strengthen up the kind of probationary period. (SMGHOSF17)

My concern is that the induction packs are never ready at the right time of the year and the other thing that falls down, is the speed at which we get people on the system. I mean we get students on in a day, but staff.....I think it took us a week or whatever, so we’ve got these people kicking around just saying ‘well I can’t do this and I can’t do that and we need to have that’ ... I mean I could deliver the package in that sense, talk to them, explain to them, sit them down, they do the tour, they know where everything is, they’ve got a mentor and they know who they can go to, they know that if it’s a management problem they can get to their DLT or mentor and that if it’s a higher level problem they can come straight to me and it’s about being able to get them up and running in terms of having a knowledge of what we’ve got here and then it’s about getting them onto the system so that they are UL rather than just part of the school and I think that’s very important. The other thing I do before anybody gets here, is to book them all onto a blackboard induction. I think that should be the norm. (SMGHOSM11)

Well I think it’s a shame that Corporate Induction seems to have disappeared because people did find that useful and they also met people from other parts of UL and generally – although it did depend on who was doing those sessions, but generally people valued it. (SMGHOSF16)

And then I think if Unit Heads have to give a local induction, then I think that they should have a little bit of training in it....you know, you could just take me through what I should be doing to new people, you know treat me as if I was a new comer to it and I don’t know, perhaps other people don’t find it difficult – not that I find it difficult, it’s just that I don’t think that I do a particularly good job at it! (SMGHOSM14)

I think again, to me – it’s probably just my ignorance – but it doesn’t seem like there are standardised procedures, there are different practices in different schools. I mean when I was appointed in UL, I had something called orientation and there were people in the school that I didn’t meet until two years after I was here, so again, I think there are different practices and I think it would be nice to have some staff development and training on induction. (SMGHOSM15)
PROBATION

How do you currently ensure that staff in your unit meet their probationary requirements?

Well again, depending on who the member of staff is, the job is delegated to the manager obviously, to see that procedure through and they will write a report to me at the various stages, to see how they’re meeting the job specification, the job description and whether they’ve got any err umm feelings about how it’s going umm, that’s basically it. It’s a reporting process to see that the thing is being done. The responsibility is upon the manager to make sure that it happens; that there is an evaluation happening at the different stages. (SMGHOUM1)

Yes I do that, absolutely. OK to be blunt, if I think back, the probationary process is a kind of an add on because of the way we work, which is fine, I don’t have a problem with that, and I didn’t have any issues with the probationary process at all – I mean you can make it more structured and more formal in which case it could have been the driver of the way I was managing things rather than what I designed myself. I felt it was relatively straightforward to do – you know the forms and I had all the information I needed and felt I could have backed it up if that had been required, so it was pretty straightforward to me – it wasn’t onerous. I mean I did get a prompt from HR – and the prompts have to come from HR - I think that has to be a statutory responsibility of HR. Yes, managers should remember etc. etc. but you’re the backstop – a quiet reminder a couple of weeks before the review is due. (SMGHOUM5)

It’s difficult to quantify isn’t it? You know, I have my standards and I have what I want from people and I suppose I have this sort of mental view of, well by this time you should be able to do this and by this time you should be able to do that. Is there a black and white? The reality is, no. It’s a value judgement on my part to be quite honest. There needs to be something more concrete if you feel they are going to fail their probation, but I mean if everything is going wonderfully then it’s not a problem! (SMGHOUM2)

I’m not sure we do that very well…I think we do the induction better than the probation if I’m honest about it. I think it comes back to UL culture and as long as you are doing OK and you’re not a problem and you’ve gone through the recruitment thing, then that’s fine…rather than, we need you to be a performer and to enhance what you do and how you can do it. The other thing is – and I think these are cultural baggage things….we say, we’re not going to give you any staff development in your first year – get used to the job first – and so we’re not going to enhance your performance at the moment – unless you can’t do the job – so if you’re a problem we’ll help you. If you’re not a problem, don’t darken my door and go away and do the job! (SMGHOUM7)

By making people aware that it’s a probationary period and it does work…I think it’s very difficult at a higher level job, because it takes time to come through –
the one bad appointment I was talking about, was a more senior level one, and I
knew by about four or five months that this was not working out, but I was ticked
off – ‘well you haven’t brought it to attention soon enough, you can’t do anything
about this’. Now it was clear to me that this person was not going to…..but I
couldn’t do anything…I had to do another six months because I was told ‘well
you’ve left it too late’. But – and I’ve had a chat with the person, but when you
are developing at senior officer level, maybe it’s that six months isn’t long
enough…and is it meaningful? – Is it meaningful?  Because I couldn’t really do
anything. I had to extend it for another six months and it was all this nebulous
stuff….wrong person, wrong approach…and they didn’t have it…..not actually
saying well you’re doing that wrong, it was just wrong for the job and how do
you…..you can’t do anything. The forms as they are, don’t work – it’s almost
easier at the sort of more basic level jobs – but I don’t think it’s meaningful.
Does anyone go at the end of probation?…… I don’t think we’re clear enough
about what the criteria are – maybe we need training?  No it doesn’t work as it
is, but if it were more directly linked…I couldn’t get rid of somebody and this
was another issue…the person when the reference came…we didn’t have the
references first off for months and months – it was four months before we saw
the horrendous sickness absence. Nowadays we do require a self declaration,
so that’s an improvement – it’s not conveyed to us of course and I don’t know
why – why wouldn’t you convey that to an appointments panel?....it was
horrendous in six months and the Post Office wouldn’t give a reference, they
just said that this person worked from that time to that time and they’ve had 40
days or whatever and that came in four months and it was too late for me to do
anything about that person and this comes back to getting references – I
couldn’t use that so why was that?  I mean I knew what it was, it was non
coping and the sickness problem with me was similar it was non coping
problems…but then the panel – is there anything wrong with asking that
question at interview - ‘You’ve got a poor sickness record’ and then they could
say ‘yes, that’s because…..and I’m OK now – why would we not? ....I’m not
sure. I mean I feel very sorry for…I think it’s very hard on people to regain and
get employment and I wouldn’t want to deny people opportunities, but at the
end of the day we’re not here to put everything right for the world, we’re here to
get the best people who are going to deliver for UL and I feel constrained in that
respect, in terms of the recruitment process….I understand stripping the data – I
don’t have an ageist problem, probably because of my age – I honestly don’t
look at….even when we have the gender or other things, I never bother to work
it out – I’m more concerned about what’s in there….but others would perhaps,
so I don’t know…but when you took all the dates out…God, I only just by
chance found out this bloke had been in prison….that he couldn’t
answer.....because I was working out this gap year…you know you’re taking
tools away for….but I think maybe too much was stripped out… I think it got to
the point – it’s the pendulum isn’t it?  Because you want to objectively
assess….to me I think there was too much taken out and I think maybe that
should be focused on the short listing and as soon as you get through…..or
relying on HR having the time to scrutinize and look for those gaps and
things…do some probing on our behalf – because we haven’t got the
information – but certainly when you come to pre-interview, I think all that
information should go to the Chairman of the panel – they should see the dates and things...and it was only by chance I worked something out from what he said and I said 'well there’s two years here that's odd isn’t it?’….no I didn’t say ‘that’s odd’, I said ‘Can you tell me what you were doing in that time and he went oohh, oohh, I can’t remember….so that’s the sort of thing where you feel disempowered. (SMGHOUF9)

Ummm regular communication, regular talking – I do the formal, you know the formal paperwork meetings as well, yeah? So that’s in addition to just checking that everything is OK and that there aren’t any issues from the outset. I always try to programme in those meetings at the intervals – programme in any dates so that they are aware of those and then HR is there as a catch all if there are any serious issues. (SMGHOUF8)

Right umm, well again this is something that we perhaps need to tighten up on. I think in the past, we’ve been reminded to fill in the various forms – because I think there’s a form at three months and another one at six, or there might be one at four as well....there’s no one that’s failed their probation period with us – I’m thinking that umm we’ve either been sort of lucky with our selection processes, or it could be at the advertising or interviewing stage, or if somebody isn’t up to scratch, but they haven’t been that bad that you could say you know, we’re not going to keep you on after the five...after the five months. We did have a problem with sort of one individual who had a few problems with the sickness, but he eventually just left and never came back and after a period of time you...his contract was terminated, but that wasn’t a failure of probation in that sense, but I mean I suppose it could have been, if we had been looking at it a bit more closely...perhaps we need to. (SMGHOU3)

Through our current probationary requirements which again is linked to performance review. We are currently corporately reviewing probation arrangements and putting in place far better arrangements. We have something currently which is adequate – at least it requires people to have set – umm or managers to have ensured through the induction process, that people are at least appropriately aware and skilled to do the jobs and to monitor what they are actually doing in a set framework over six months for all our support staff, which is what I am primarily concerned with...umm we’ve actually currently got two members of staff who are actually currently under probation, and one of whom I’m dealing with directly...ummm two I’m dealing with directly – we’ve got three under probation sorry – two of whom I’m dealing with directly and that process is being followed. (SMGHOU6)

Well, to tell you the truth Allison, that really is a matter of filling in the form at the end I think – although it helps you to monitor. I’ve never done anybody myself……all I’ve ever done is filling in the form at the end – it’s been a bit of an exercise. (SMGHOU4)
PROBATION IMPROVEMENTS

Are there any parts of the probationary process you think should be improved and, if so, what and how?

I don’t think the probationary period is seen as an individual enhancement exercise – it’s more getting used to the job and start performing. I think there should be more regular forms of probationary meeting. At the moment what we do is a six months one and I think there is a need for a line manager meeting with the individual on a regular basis – let’s say once a month to review progress/performance or whatever. I don’t think the forms are helpful – they don’t help me undertake probation….I’m much happier with measurement against job description and person spec. (SMGHOUM7)
PROBATION

How do you currently ensure that staff in your school meet their probationary requirements?

We have informal probationary processes in place, to be quite honest we are confident at the time of appointment and I have only had one problem in ten years. I suppose in areas like Sports Facilities it becomes a more important process. (SMGHOSM12)

In a very, very ad hoc way – it's like a Sword of Damocles hanging over ones head for any young person coming in. I mean I remember when I got down to the last stage of interviews for the Azkaban job, they sort of said at the interview ‘You will of course realise that only after your probation will the job be confirmed’. Well, you either want me or you don't want me – make me jump through probationary hoops then you can forget it! But it was the notion of what their interpretation was of probation – If I didn't absolutely cut the mustard, they would use that as a way to exit me! That would be the impression I got. So I don't like the whole notion of probation – I think it's not learning organisation stuff. I mean you get someone in, you go through a whole series of processes – they like you, you like them, right, OK, fine, and if there are some rough edges to that person along the way, then we're duty bound to look after that person and grow them a bit. So I mean, I think probation sympathetically handled is….but we don't have a very good system for probation here, I mean I don't manage anything like a proper probationary system – actually, what it was and how it should happen, I couldn't tell you! (SMGHOSM10)

The probationary period I think is not, is not, strongly utilised in terms of staff and it could be much more so, but that would require a much more explicit statement of everything that is required – does that make some kind of sense? But it's very difficult to actually get hard data, I mean with an academic, can they actually stand up and give a lecture? Well you don't know unless you're there do you? And then it might not suit you, but it might suit everybody else. So you know, I mean some of those things are really difficult to sort out, so we do a lot of things like compensating for things, so we do a lot of team teaching which brings a lot of benefit, so that's been kind of an opportunity to kind of overcome the fact that I can't go and watch all the lecturers and then just hearing the conversations around the teams about how they're going to deliver and how these things pan out and we get a good solution I think and that's what happens. And it does overcome the weaknesses, but in overcoming the weaknesses then….do you see what I mean? And I think it's an issue. (SMGHOSF17)

Again, it's a monitoring process and if things go wrong- which I've got no problem with at all – if things go wrong, they go wrong! Because unless they can actually stand up and cut the mustard, the first thing the students will do is to come here and complain. And it is that monitoring process in terms of the
mentoring and whoever their mentor is, they will work with them really, really closely. (SMGHOSM11)

The Heads of Centre would do that because I wouldn’t be watching what they do and there would be certain things that they should be doing and certain things that they would be asked to do, and then if they don’t do them…so if there was a senior technician and then a junior technician and the junior technician was new, then the senior technician would give them feedback on their performance. I think that works quite well – certainly they do complete the forms and send them up to me, I think that what we’re not so good at and it happened in one case, is that at the end of the year, we are to quick to say ‘yes’ they can stay and it was curtains after that – we had one example that was all. And it was nobody’s fault, I don’t think that any of us could have predicted that, but it was somebody who had obviously done that in another position and then got themselves here and then…which is a mentality I just don’t understand at all. (SMGHOSF16)

I try to remember to do it and fill in the forms – I mean Lavender is very good she does try to remind me. I’ve never had any one….I’ve only one that I should have got rid of and in that persons particular case we didn’t do anything about it which was foolish, I regret that, but that’s the only one and were working on him. I don’t find the process particularly useful, frankly. I mean if I had a nightmare situation, then it might come to my rescue, but so far I haven’t had any. I find that most people who come in are prepared to do what ever you say anyway, so people come in and if they are not qualified teachers we are saying to them we want you to do the PGCE. (SMGHOSM14)

I meet with them to look at what it was we intended them to do! The forms are dreadful, I mean going through them… Appearance – and who would have thought that Lord Voldemort, the man who wears mini skirts and cycling shorts would have been made a Professor? He wouldn’t have got it! (SMGHOSM13)

Well as you know, I am relatively young in my management – I only started two months ago, so we haven’t gone through this yet. But again, I think that could be part of the staff review – we would just have more staff review meetings with the member of staff than with other members of staff. (SMGHOSM15)
STAFF REVIEW

UL currently has in place a staff review and development scheme. How would you rate yourself in terms of this scheme being integrated with your unit?

- Fully integrated
- Used annually but with further developments necessary
- Not used frequently enough
- Not used at all
- Other

I would say it’s the second most definitely. It is used, it is in, there’s an insistence that all staff are included, or given the opportunity to be included and umm….I…...as a part of regular team meetings I ask for feedback on it. And what we’ve been slow in doing – this is the development bit – is bringing back the process so that we get all the umm, I mean as an example, the lIP advisor was surprised that managers don’t actually see all the documents for all the staff. Now, that’s in a small department….hhhhsssh…that might be feasible, but in a large department……well that’s going to be very difficult. What you want to see is that…whatever your… well it’s two way. I’m starting there and I’m starting there, but from the top down, your objectives for the whole department are going down there and then their aspirations are coming up there and you’ve got to see the two coming through somehow umm, and often this is difficult umm, for some members of staff…it’s easier for some because now they’re involved in and know the process, but when you start getting out to the fringes and again, I don’t like to home in on the DLO, but they say ‘what’s all this rubbish?’ generally they will say that…not to me…but this is Mr. Filch feeding that back to me if you like. So I try and meet them more often, to get them involved and have been doing so for a while, to get them to see that in fact it’s not rubbish, it’s not just for me it’s for them as well, that they’re involved in the process and trying to get them to think about performance themselves…so that’s been difficult…that’s the development bit – it’s getting that interaction. I mean I was quite astounded after all this time that through speaking to some of them that they still don’t see the people there as their customers and they think of themselves as…and in a sense they are right - we are all one big team UL, but within the UL team, there are divisions if you like, and they are providing a service to other people and getting them to see that has been difficult. I think we’re addressing it slowly, and those kinds of issues, but then you try and lead on from that to say well as part of that service now, your performance is important. You know, giving a simple example, if you go to ‘Boots’ and stand by the counter and nobody comes to serve you, you start asking questions! So if, you know, we have requests from people and we’re not responding to them, they should ask questions. They seem to take great offense when people challenge them…as though they have some right you know, and I say no, you don’t have any right, you have a right to be challenged – you’re a service provider!...and it’s getting that message across…it’s slow…but these are the development issues and getting them to think of their own development so that
we can get a sensible and meaningful training plan together, development plan. They've been the issues, the obstacles if you like, and maybe…..well Mr Filch has particular problems because he's got to manage all this and many other things and again as part of this paper I'm… one of the liP advisors latest comments was that they're obviously under great strain here – resources – they're being stretched, which doesn't help, but that's something I've got to deal with…anyway, sorry, that's a digression. Q – How do appraise performance? Again, that's easier at a higher level. Are we meeting budgets? Programmes and times….all of those things are easy to measure. It's when you get down to the more detailed individual performance of an electrician or a carpenter…because I think we're back to the group. We have to measure them as a group. How are you performing against the MM1 standard if you like – the Minor Maintenance Standard. To get down to individual performance would need more resources I would suggest, actually…to be able to measure that because we're back to ‘man hours’ for performance. I've never yet found one that's been very successful! We had all sorts…starting with the DLO again, we had all sorts of bonus schemes introduced – which were work measured bonus schemes. They can either be individual or groups – with something like a painting squad, then you've got a group measurement. But within four years of introducing them, or the bonus scheme that we introduced, it was absolved. It became totally non cost effective to monitor it, measure it. You had more people measuring than you had people doing the work! And then you think well this is the 80:20 rule, you know, we're spending 80 per cent of the effort to get 20 of a return, you know! It's just not cost effective to do that at that level. And it’s got to be cost effective, whatever appraisal system you put in. It's a bit like space charging or capitol charging or whatever – you can end up with an army of staff implementing the thing…what are you getting out of it in the end? I mean again, if it's going to be appraisal, then the staff will expect something. If we're always saying well we're not going to give you something unless you give us something, the staff are going to say well we're not going to do this unless you give us something….there’s got to be a reward in this appraisal hasn't there? (SMGHOUM1)

I think it's been an add on because of what we do and so we'd need to dovetail to it – but you look elsewhere in the organisation and it's very soft cell – it probably doesn't provide the manager with the right tool to deal with something I don’t think – and I'm not just talking about, you know poor performance, I'm talking about the developmental side because appraisal is as much about development. (SMGHOUM5)

Used annually but with further developments necessary. Again, the reality is that the objectives are fairly specific, but not sufficiently specific without me adding to them. So if we want to develop a process to do x and y, then I'll sit down with them and say right, as part of this I want you to do this, this and this and for you to do that, that and that – which is more than what's in their performance review. We're just running a procurement cut, so last year the strategic thing from Professor Slughorn was roll out the procurement cut – but there's an awful lot of detail that sits behind that. (SMGHOUM2)
Used annually but also with mid-term assessments – I don’t think we would have got IiP without it. I mean to be honest, I think we’ve gone further than the scheme because we’ve introduced things like learning logs and all that kind of stuff – which it doesn’t say you have to do in the scheme – but I think if you’re going to look at review and development, then I think you need things like this. To be quite honest, I think there should be an institutional learning log. There was that debate at the committee – you weren’t there - but the trouble with it, was they were trying to push this sort of course, but you see my view of CPD, is that it’s of this type of learning log type thing and it’s about evaluating your learning log on a regular basis and I think we should be evaluating the learning of all our staff on a regular basis and so there should be a learning log for all our staff. Certainly I haven’t got a problem about format or anything like that, but I think there should be something that says everyone at UL does it! Well I think it should almost be mandatory, but it’s not mandatory in L&IS because there is no agreed rule that it should be. But I think if we really believe in managing people and trying to develop people – it doesn’t matter whether it’s the performance management or it’s another aspect of their work - and my view is that I don’t think you can do that, if you don’t measure learning. We don’t even measure our own staffs learning! I carry out management monitoring via management, not via the staff review and development, that’s why I said if I had a problem with someone’s performance, I would bring it to their attention, but it wouldn’t be as part of the staff review and development scheme – it would be as part of managing them…..I think there should be formal meetings with your manager to look at your performance against objectives – it doesn’t happen with me with my manager, it doesn’t happen…well, it does happen sometimes with me, but I don’t do it on a regular basis – Ummm again, it tends to be when problems exist – it tends to be the fire fighting end rather than the…and it’s because we’re in a …. I don’t know, it’s part of the culture again, I think…we tend to be an endpoint of deadlines…I don’t think we plan in enough detail…..Some of the key bits of all this stuff that I thought were good, when it comes to visioning and it says ‘needs to be realistic’ and I quite often think our aspirations are unrealistic and the best example of that is target setting within schools – they never hit a target – so maybe their aspirations and visions aren’t very good? There’s either a problem with the targets, or there should be some sort of a stick that says you’re continuously not meeting your targets there’s a problem – you either need a bit of development or we need to kick you out or something!…it’s the lack of follow through, consistent follow through – we don’t have that AT ALL. There is no consistent follow through. (SMGHOUM7)

I would say probably the second category because it’s used annually across the board and in some areas it’s much more developed – to quarterly reviews – but it’s not comprehensive. (SMGHOUF9)

Fully integrated. Measuring performance against objectives is a tricky thing when there’s no appraisal scheme, particularly with people who are new and value objectives. So in a way, that makes it much more of a softer type of profile, but what it is really, is just a two way discussion of how we sort of promote….but more often than not, within those discussions it’s about ‘I want to
develop and I want to develop further’ - and that’s when you’ve got constraints on you…saying well, you know you’re in that grade and from my point of view I say ‘well, you need to demonstrate that’…. and I’ll put a case forward and go through all the necessary process to see whether we can take it any further. But then we’ve got wider implications for the whole lot. (SMGHOUF8)

Well it’s fully integrated in that every member of staff has a review, but I wouldn’t say that is equally useful for all members of staff to be honest. It comes back to this thing – we do it every year, but I mean, a lot of what we are doing is repetitive if you like, ummmm and often it’s used as a formal means of saying you’ve done an OK job this year. But if you look at the scheme in it’s entirety, whereby you’re supposed to be agreeing goals going forward and measuring achievement against those goals – with the processing sort of work the goals are the same every year and like I say you are sort of monitoring it as you go through the year rather than having a little snapshot as it were when you do the appraisal in October or December or when ever it is. So I think dependent upon the nature of the job, it has more use to some members of staff than it does to others. I think some of the junior staff see it as a formality that isn’t really adding much to what they are doing. I mean if they’ve got an issue that they’d like to raise, then they are encouraged – all of us have got the office doors open – they are encouraged to sort of speak about it at the time it arises, not as part of an annual sort of process, so any minor niggles or whatever are sort of dealt with that way. I mean I think at a more senior level, you know at my level or Hermione’s level, Professor Sprout’s level – that sort of level whereby Professor Slughorn has been given sort of new sort of objectives or whatever, which he is then cascading down – you know it’s about moving forward – every year there’s something different in my appraisal and there’s things we can talk about like what worked well and what hasn’t and so forth, but the lower down the scale you get, the less there is of that sort of change. Q – How effective do you think the scheme is in identifying development needs?

Identification of learning and development needs…that’s a standard question every year, but if we didn’t have the appraisal process we would still have the learning and development needs – you’d just do it by a different means. So we have to start every year when they are appraised with what would you like to do – and we’ve got quite a lot of our staff who have either done the post entry training or are looking to do a course of study or whatever, so we pick that up – I mean it is effective in that sense and we have to sort of collate all the requests or whatever at the end of the process and Professor Slughorn sort of err supports or doesn’t and that goes into the staff development process, so it’s effective with that, but if we didn’t have an annual appraisal we would just do it a different way –perhaps as part of out staff team meetings – you know, if anyone would like to do some staff development please come forward if you would. So it’s not that it wouldn’t happen if we didn’t have the appraisal. Q – What are your views about more formal appraisal systems? I personally wouldn’t have a problem with it – I mean I think the resistance might come from people who might feel they would not be able to perform or what ever and they don’t want a formal measure and so forth. There’s usually union resistance to this sort of thing, as I say, I personally wouldn’t have a problem with it, but as you
say it’s a soft touch – but then the management of the staff is happening outside of that isn’t it? But in some ways it’s a way of formally thanking the staff if you like, or…perhaps thanking is not the right word…but formally recognising their contribution and it’s a formal means of err identifying learning needs. It’s not meant as a performance measurement in that sense is it? I mean the performance management, if you like, is how the department is managed or not, outside of that isn’t it? On a sort of day to day basis. (SMGHOUM3)

I would say that it is fully integrated, but what we haven’t done this year is to carry out the formal reviews - though I can evidence that we are continually reviewing staff development needs through our management processes – but I know we need to do that, that is a gap. But what I would say – and I think I’ve discussed this with you previously – I think it’s great, it’s a really good process, a good scheme, but I think there’s too much of it and I think we need to rationalize it in some way, make it slimmer. It’s simple, but there’s a lot of stuff that goes with it OK, and I think we need to look at that again, to aid people or to encourage people to complete the tasks. And I’ve recently gone through it myself this year with my line manager and basically we focused primarily on the objective setting process and what I needed to have in terms of development to go alongside that. It was quite a simple process – but that’s because we’ve had the benefit of all the other information – we’ve done it several times, so we didn’t need to go through the whole process and there’s something about what’s required for new managers of staff and those who are more experienced in the use of the concepts, context and the actual contents within UL’s scheme.

Q - How effective do you think the scheme is in identifying development needs? I think it’s very effective at identifying learning needs because it gives a focus for it and without that, it’s very difficult to do that. Q – What are your views about more formal appraisal systems? Well that’s done here through the use of individual action plans and the performance objectives setting process, as I said previously, so in effect we do have that formal process of appraisal within HR – it does exist – we don’t call it that, we call it performance objective setting, but within that, it’s explicit that individuals have their own targets, standards to be met, so therefore that gives me the framework for appraising whether they are or aren’t meeting that. But I think it’s important to keep that formally separate from the staff review and development scheme – the commonality are the objectives, the objectives sit in the middle – your objectives are this; to achieve those you may need this level of input in terms of training, development, whatever, it could be anything yeah, so that the outputs are, you successfully achieving the objectives at the end of the review period - which is the same as the staff development review as an annual period yeah? So quite simplistically I think it does exist – performance management does exist within the organisation we just haven’t articulated it properly or fully yet and that’s one of our next objectives in HR to try and do that. (SMGHOUM6)

Fully integrated. It seems to me that Student Services – having looked at the file up there - have been very efficient in the way they’ve done it perhaps because Harry Potter was in charge! They’ve done it annually, they’ve done an analysis annually – it’s all in place. Anyway it all seems to have been done very
efficiently and that’s just what we’ve had the meeting about, so that we’re all doing it in a similar way, we’re all speaking in the same voice and following the same procedures etc.  

Q - How effective do you think this scheme is in identifying learning and development needs? I think it’s a bit mixed to tell you the truth Allison, obviously, I think it’s very useful to have a staff review and development although it’s all paper based and I think there should be some observational evidence in it. I think as well, that if you do it annually, a lot of people can get a bit cynical about it if they don’t see that it is an integral part of the operational plan…it can be a bit repetitious with maintenance targets and I think it’s a problem if it’s just going through the motions. It’s often hard to get some SMART targets when it’s often quite routine and there’s nothing built in…it’s got to be seen as being worthwhile. Quite often people say, oh well I put this down and I put that down in my review and nothing happened. It’s got to be seen to make an impact and not just for UL but also for the individual.  

Q - How do you currently measure or appraise staff against these objectives given that UL doesn’t have a formal appraisal system? Well it should be self-monitoring – I do that with mine. The other thing of course is that when you come to the annual meeting, you look back on the targets that were set for the previous year and if some of those weren’t achieved then you’d want to know why, what the problems were, or, if they are on-going, they carry on into the next year, but obviously you’d do a review. (SMGHOUM4)
STAFF REVIEW IMPROVEMENTS

Are there any parts of the staff review process you think should be improved and, if so, what and how?

Well I think all the monitoring side and the evaluation – that’s all gone by the wayside hasn’t it? And maybe some way of picking that up? I think some of the paperwork could be streamlined…..but the process though…. – it is useful, I support it….it can be a nuisance but…!! (SMGOUF9)

The formal assessment against outcomes. Well I think the issue of performance benefits has to be there – whether it practically can be there? I certainly think it’s got to be there for higher level managers – performance benefits or non-benefits – although there are whole issues of methodology there and we can’t go into that. In terms of our staff I don’t think it’s practical to bring in for all sorts of reasons, to try and bring it in and it’s not one that’s probably worthwhile. One that has an edge on it in terms of formal measurement against formal outcomes – one way of doing this may actually be divorcing the two. I think the other side of appraisal is whether an annual system is adequate or not and I think it will vary from function to function. I would say that in most support set ups they may well have an annual event and need it as an annual event – it depends on the cycle and what it is you are doing. In an academic environment – is an annual event the right cycle? I don’t know. It would probably depend on the academic role. What I do think, is that if it is annual and only annual then nothing will happen in between – or there is a danger that nothing will happen in between. You don’t want to make it bureaucratic, but there needs to be some sort of continuity within the year otherwise it just becomes disembodied. And really, if there is a proper two way process in a lot of areas it shouldn’t be bureaucratic because really one would hope that managers are speaking to staff termly – they’ve got a system, so it’s tagging that into it I think. If they haven’t got a system then it’s going to be onerous for them, but then they are not doing something they should be doing anyway. (SMGHOUM5)

I must confess, I’m not a great fan of the forms themselves. I think they leave too much open for individual managers to apply standards differently, and I’m not suggesting there is an easy solution…..I mean there’s no reward system either.
STAFF REVIEW

UL currently has in place a staff review and development scheme. How would you rate yourself in terms of this scheme being integrated with your school?

- Fully integrated
- Used annually but with further developments necessary
- Not used frequently enough
- Not used at all
- Other

I think the Staff Review Process is somewhere between fully integrated into the school and used annually. I think it needs to be slimmed down a bit. The discussions list is useful, but it can be too much. It is more useful to get people to identify their role and map out how they see it developing, a mix between developmental review and setting of tasks and goals. Staff Review involves a lot of negation and persuasion, for example, you can do a, b or c but I also want you to do x, y and z. It’s about finding an appropriate balance between management by objectives and pure development. (SMGHOSM12)

The IiP advisors said that they would like us to look at the way in which we review the budget implications of Staff Development Review – you know, you get a paucity of money and then I work creatively to support people - and they said, yes you do that, but you don’t actually know how much it costs you do you? Because your report is qualitative rather than quantitative and I said Yeah, I’d agree with that. And what they were saying, is that they thought we should measure more the impact of the continuous improvement – the impact of staff development on the people and on the school and measure it qualitatively and also quantitatively. And I thought well, yeah, that’s right, so that’s good. I mean what we do, is we have Staff Development Reviews – we’re going through them now, and they are - people know - they are linked directly to their individual needs, but also to the needs of the organisation. And I have actually sort of used it with two people as a way of saying well look you know, we’ve got a bit of a problem here. You need to take a holistic approach to management – you take a holistic approach and then you get the end product, because you’ve got the climate right and I would do that approach. (SMGHOSM10)

Well there’s been a superb IiP report so I think it’s superbly well integrated into the operation of the school! I think that we’ve adjusted the timing of the different bits to make it all align and work better, but I think that alignment with the management structures would help and I think that there needs to be an extension of the management and the devolvement to line management roles within the schools.  Q - How do you currently measure or appraise staff against these objectives given that UL doesn’t have a formal appraisal system? With difficulty and it needs other systems in place to give it the….to give UL the teeth it needs. (SMGHOSF17)
Annually with further developments – I think we need to get the corporate objectives out there and then we need to look at those, in terms of the school development plan and ensuring that those are as closely matched as they can be - and then another couple of hoops to get through in terms of the Estyn Inspection. So we’ve got three sets of planning going on at any one time… and I think it’s got to be tied into all of that. There are key things in terms of Estyn that we all need to do – Estyn and the Welsh Assembly Governments objectives and there are key things in terms of UL such as RDAPs and increasing the research profile… and I think those have to be… well it’s the agenda for staff development and review. And it’s got to be tightly linked in somewhere, because otherwise I mean, people come in and they sit down and say ‘well I’d like to do this course next year’ and one of the things I’ve brought in, is applications for staff development otherwise people would just… can I go on this course? Can I go on that course? … and we have clearly articulated why they are going, what the benefit is to their course, what other courses have they been on this academic year, how has that helped to impact on their performance. (SMGHOSM11)

Well it is used annually, but what we decided to do, was that rather than say everyone has to have a mid-term review, was that all those who were reviewing would email staff and ask them if they would like one – which I did and only three wanted one. So there is a mid term review, but there is also the understanding - which I think is quite right - that people can arrange to see their operational manager or come and see me whenever they want to. It’s usually where there are problems – in fact almost invariably when there are problems! I mean some people will put it in their drawer and wouldn’t really look at it until the end of the following year, but they will find then, that they have done all the things that they said they would do. Q - How do you currently measure or appraise staff against these objectives given that UL doesn’t have a formal appraisal system? Well, you can’t. Well, it’s not that you can’t because you can, but you’re not supposed to, that’s not what it’s about. There are objectives, and then the ones I get following it are reviewed and then a discussion about how they’ve reached their targets and what they’ve achieved over and above that and what they haven’t achieved. It’s an opportunity for them to say why they have had trouble in some areas and why everybody else is successful. But it’s not performance management and it’s not appraisal and was never intended to be. Certainly in my experience, if people haven’t achieved a target, they’ve given a very good reason why not and there are others that wouldn’t agree to a target in the first place because they knew they couldn’t achieve it. And in neither of those situations would it be appropriate for you say well you’ve just got to do it – UL says, or I say! I mean I have to say I never approached appraisal in that way either – I don’t think it achieves anything….I mean if it’s a real problem, then it becomes a disciplinary matter eventually, if it can’t be resolved; but it’s always talked about in a separate meeting (SMGHOSF16)

Annually but not fully developed – I mean there’s one or two people who manage to dodge being developed if I’m honest umm and there always will be,
so long as timetables exist and staff aren’t on a 40 hour week to be in attendance the whole time. People will always find some excuses not to make the carefully arranged appointment, but no, I think it’s alright actually, I think err I don’t think it’s a bad idea at all. Q - How effective do you think this scheme is in identifying learning and development needs? To be quite honest I don’t think we’ve had any real shocks out of it – one or two staff have had shocks – you know, administrators finding themselves being recommended to go on HNCs and things like that so that’s going to be fun. I mean it is only a recommendation, you can’t force them to do it, but it would get them qualified. Q - How do you currently measure or appraise staff against these objectives given that UL doesn’t have a formal appraisal system? They appraise themselves – they are encouraged to think and reflect on it before they come to the process. I mean even in a fairly large school like this, I do actually know what most people are doing. I suppose it could make life easier in certain circumstances – where people that are capable of performing well, aren’t. I suppose it’s useful for that and anything that forces us to confront uncomfortable would probably do us good actually. (SMGHOSM14)

I think that there needs to be more tracking, tracking of an agreed plan. I mean it’s not only people at our school but also in other schools, they say they just stick in last years staff review form, change the date and get the HOS to sign it. Q - How do you currently measure or appraise staff against these objectives given that UL doesn’t have a formal appraisal system? Because we are a small school, we monitor and we know what each other is doing and it’s very easy to assess the progress against the targets. So it’s not a problem to assess the performance relative to the target, we all know it, because we all know each other – we work very closely with each other. I think it should be layers of people within the school. That’s the way it used to work in the University of Gryffindor before I came here. For example the Professors would look at the Senior Lecturers and Senior Lecturers would look at the Lecturers and so on. (SMGHOSM15)
CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND SUCCESSION PLANNING

In terms of career development and succession planning, how do you currently identify and nurture staff within your unit as part of your succession planning?

It’s difficult, because it’s a very flat structure and they are very specialized people, so career progression is difficult, because if one person leaves, there is not another person who could automatically apply. (SMGHOUM1)

Through delegation. (SMGHOUM5)

There is one truly recognised qualification in procurement and we put our submission in last year and there are a lot of short courses around done by the Welsh Procurement thing…I mean should we put something in the senior contract now where progression through qualification is rewarded by a fairly rapid move up the scale?...At least you’ve got somebody for three years and by the last year they should be doing some pretty decent stuff….then the hard part is keeping them for the fourth year!....possibly a retention allowance? (SMGHOUM2)

Delegate things – an example of that is health and safety, where over the last two years Cormac McLaggen has been Chair of the Health and Safety L&IS Committee. Now that’s up to Madame Pince this year. Now they will both have chaired the Health and safety committee…..careful delegation to bring them on. When Cormac first took over the library, I didn’t delegate the budget in the library – I didn’t delegate anything at all – as he got his feet under the table, I delegated that and now he runs all his own show which means that when I’ve done myself out of a job, I can retire! (SMGHOUM7)

Ummm how do we do that? Well really by trying to up skill aren’t we? We do do that – we really have sort of these standards that we say we’ve got and that our priority has to be what you essentially need to do the job, then you look at the stuff that adds value and then the bit that’s sort of aspirational and you try to cover them all. But if you prioritise – you have to prioritise the first one because you can’t be without that – but we’re trying to get a balance between those three. Ummm, and I think we’re doing more of that actually…I think all the liP stuff was helpful for us on this…and ummm, sorry, just go back to the question again……I encourage them to add value even though it may be going a bit above the weight of the job. This is where I would love to see a little bit more of opening up and progression criteria and meeting standards – I think that’s very motivational and we went through a little spell when we were doing that and it seems to have been put down a little bit and I’ve been very disappointed, because we’ve put forward all these proposals and we’ve really developed skills within certain areas where we’ve added value – real meaningful skills that have actually contributed to….etc. and the inability to sort of open up grades and encourage people is very disappointing to me. We had it all in a business plan, all the costs were covered – they were all relatively low costs, we’re relying too
much on people’s good will...obviously it adds value to their skills and they are more marketable, but I don’t think we’re valuing it enough to gain the benefits of that – what were doing is.....you want some movement out...but sometimes a little more encouragement and investment that you put in would be... I don’t think there’s enough attention. I think we do try to do that and we try to do it through grading and some of our ... we managed to get a bid in and we managed to do that and sort of build people and encourage them to get training, add value. What we’ve also done, is that we’ve got people to fill in the forms. We’ve got a condensed version of those forms that you did – we’ve got them down to one page because we know it wouldn't happen otherwise, where they are filling them in and actually saying what we are going to get from this and what value are you getting back and all that sort of thing. I was really impressed by something one of the – I must write a paper – you’d have been very impressed....a scale one person.....that was a great big knock back that we couldn't honour that – I think it needs more supporting by the organisation of that kind of approach.....I’d like to see some kind of openness, but real bars, not ones that you just go through whether you do something or you know no-one likes you and you’ve done fowl – I mean real achievements to get through and something to aim for and I think we need a more corporate sort of support to that approach and I think because we are trying to do it and it’s easier in some ways being a trading area because we can fund that sort of specialist training, but it’s the rewarding and motivating.... (SMGHOUF9)

...What do you mean by succession planning?... Oh yeah, yeah. There’s a couple of people within the department where I am trying hard with them to develop them yeah? So ummm, for example there’s our web assistant – well I can quickly see that she’s web officer material now, but then again I’ll have to prove her worth, but she’s feeding off the web officer to learn new skills so that if the web officer was off, she can take over. It’s all sort of in my head, but I’ve got sort of skills in those areas now, sort of within the team then. (SMGHOUF8)

Well again, you would have to look at the different aspects of the department I suppose isn’t it? I mean the succession problem – there’s only a few key areas in finance where you would have an issue I would suggest.....on the processing, if we were to loose some of the credit clerks or the debit clerks, OK, there would be a hole for while, but there’s a lot of people sort of in the department doing a similar job so that you’ve got cover, or it would be relatively easy to pull somebody in from either a temp agency or to advertise. But when you are looking at the more sort of technical stuff, then that’s when you get into the difficulty – you know, pay roll would be an example – if Percy or Bill or both of them were to be off then we’d have a real issue if it was for any amount of time and to be quite honest we haven’t got much by way of cover there. But I don’t think it’s really practical to try and cover that eventuality, anyway I mean I think if Bill is off Percy can obviously do the job and vice versa so you are making the assumption that any unexpected absence would be for the short term and that it would only be one of them, so you’re into the sort of disaster planning scenario rather than succession planning. We used to rotate our staff between the debtors and creditors and one of the pay roll posts was in that
Section Two: The Performance Conundrum – Transcribed Interviews from UL’s Senior Managerial Group

arrangement, but it fell down when the staff were quite content to be doing what they were doing and didn’t want to rotate – especially within payroll as they see it as a specialist area - I mean the succession planning would be difficult on the accounting level in a sense...if one of our accountants left – I mean there’s the generic skills, but there’s also the local knowledge that goes with it.....it’s quite difficult getting a number of people to have sort of the same skills, because you’ve all got your sort of day job to do – I mean it’s something that we are sort of aware of, but I mean in some cases, it’s a sort of ‘luck’ scenario….so I’m not sure how well we are doing it, is my answer to that – we are aware of the issues but it’s err not sort of…. (SMGHOUM3)

Well a couple of things – one is to do with staffing needs – what are the staffing needs for the organisation? And what I look at in our management team as part of our HR Planning, is what is it we require in terms of our staffing base for the future in the organisation and because we’ve recently revised the HR strategy - it’s now part of the corporate strategic plan – we’ve got a very strategic, policy driven function, we recognise that for the next four or five years we will want to have as many people within this team who are actually qualified in terms of CIPD therefore we encourage as many members of staff as possible – as many as we can afford – to put them through the CIPD or a post graduate course linked to that. OK, so that’s one of the things, and that in terms of career planning, means that individuals are able to assist with some of the more strategic issues we are doing – either now or in the future. It also hopefully will, in terms of succession planning will help with us developing people who may want to stay with the organisation a bit longer, what we don’t have, are many opportunities, because we are a small team, for people to move from a to b within the team itself, but through development and through opportunities of getting involved in project work or something that is away from the norm of the activity, it hopefully will encourage people to stay a bit longer. On the other side of course, we want healthy turnover, so we don’t want everybody to be MCIPD within the next five years – it doesn’t make any sense – we actually want some sort of level of turnover within the team so, that’s the normal way we do it, through the normal activity within the management team and looking at development needs and looking at the service needs in terms of what we have to provide for the next ‘x’ years. Linked to that of course, is the natural process of succession planning through age – so I know, I know who are going to go, I know some people are going to retire. I anticipate in the forthcoming year that we will get a level of turnover, may one maybe two people will simply go – one of whom I know will retire in the next planning cycle, next year and I’ve already discussed with him a year in advance as one of my own personal objectives, what we will do as part of the succession planning. So I’m working with the incumbent and I’ve been given the lead in time to discuss that and I’m already discussing with a member of staff how that member of staff should or could take over that particular role. So it’s part of a formalized process linked again to the action planning process within HR. (SMGHOUM6)

It’s a bit hard to say when I’ve just taken over and things tend to build up historically....I mean I could talk more easily with Education. Certainly when
vacancies came up and you can think of somebody who’s good and would do it well, you obviously talk to them and say ‘come on, we think you should apply for this’… there is quite a lot of movement at times and with different responsibilities. Sometimes, it’s hard to get people to do it – especially things like course directorships and things like that, even though it is developmental…so I don’t know, how do you do it? Talk to people, encourage them…. (SMGHOUM4)
CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND SUCCESSION PLANNING

In terms of career development and succession planning, how do you currently identify and nurture staff within your school as part of your succession planning?

We try to incorporate succession planning into the system and encourage staff to think about where they might need development for the future, for example, working alongside a Course Director or being a Joint Year Tutor with a more experienced member of staff. Review is a good thing and we do this via the Schools Management and Planning Team. There are quite a few key tasks, roles, and remits within the School which we don’t actually advertise. This is because these roles are not formalised or incentivised and therefore you wouldn’t be likely to get any applicants! We prefer to approach individuals and tell them that we would like to see them take on this particular role or remit. UL does pay an honorarium payment for some roles e.g. Director of L&T, Director of R&E and it would be good to see other roles being formalised and incentivised. I think PRP is important in terms of rewarding staff. I think it should be rewarded through honorarium payments through, so that if for example, a member of staff ‘runs out of steam’, the payment can be stopped. There also needs to be proper bars and criteria in place. (SMGHOSM12)

Well what we do is we have regular chats with them and through the staff review and development process, where they sort of see themselves going – what are their short and medium term goals? And I have an ‘open door’ policy here, so does Professor Umbridge and it’s interesting to note that quite a number of staff will come in on a regular basis just to talk to me and say ‘well I’m doing this, but I’d really like to have a bash at doing that’ or whatever, and we say well OK, what does that mean? And we sit down and talk about it and then I make a note about it and stick it on their file and then we’ll raise that in a mid-term review and then I’ll slot that in and / or try to make it happen straight away. And I mean we have grown a number of people, we’ve also lost a few people – they’ve gone on to do other things outside. (SMGHOSM10)

You can’t do it. Budgetary arrangements don’t allow for me to meet any of those sorts of things. I think there are serious issues about it. I’d like to be able to have a much more developmental talk about planning. I mean the only way I can have any kind of talk about development is at my staffing meeting, where we confirm the list of staff that I’ve got and I get told I’m not getting any more, so we can’t talk developmentally - or through those forms where I’ve asked for cover before people have left, because by the time they have left, it’s too late. I can’t do any succession planning then and I’m panicking to keep the ship going…so I think if you want succession planning, then you’ve got to invest in it. (SMGHOSF17)

What I try and do with every member of staff, is to identify their aspirations and then try and create that sort of environment so that they can move into whatever it is they are good at. (SMGHOSM11)
Succession planning is a really big thing with me, in that the extremely unique course director on the Advanced Potion Making is retiring next summer. I mean in the case of George Weasley we are still trying to agree on the plans – I mean we’ve obviously got a few months. EMG are making it more complicated by saying Oh well if you want to, you can appoint a Professor or something like that, to either take over his job or to act as a sort of hovering father figure and we’ve got a bit of choice and we’re trying to work out how to do it right. But I think that anyone who works longer than their retirement age is an idiot – I shall be going at sixty! (SMGHOSM14)

I’ll tell you what, it’s bloody difficult. I mean I know that I’ve got a whole bunch of very experienced staff who are going to be leaving soon and I just find it so difficult when I am being ‘blocked’ in terms of the staffing apps process. I think there are two critical appointments – I mean they are all critical but two are more critical – that’s the Head of Transfiguration and the Head of Charms and I’ve got to make that appointment I believe, certainly six months in advance, three months might be more appropriate but lets say in that final run up to exam boards. So the Charms Department is the kind of barometer of the health of any Art School, so that’s a critical one as well. It doesn’t necessarily need to be mentored in, but when I look at the staff, I don’t think there is the ambition to develop from any of the roles, but also, I think that there has been too much of a tradition of promoting from within and then you don’t get he ‘fresh blood’ as it were. (SMGHOSM13)

Again, that’s staff review and I will always talk to staff about what is the next step in the ladder they need to go to and what are the requirements for that step. And again, that’s about the staff development they need in order to reach that step. That is like a standard part of the agenda in the staff review meeting – we look at what is the next stage and how to get there. ‘I’m a senior lecturer and I require a PL, so what are the next stages for me’? And we divide the staff development accordingly – according to need. (SMGHOSM15)
REWARDING PERFORMANCE

As a Head of Unit, what are your views on rewarding good performance?

Flexible benefits like what? Don't say time off because that's totally counterproductive!! First of all, people should be paid at the right sort of level for what they are doing, and then they should be expected to do it and you don't say thank you to somebody for doing what they are supposed to do! I was always taught that by the Chief Administrator - he said well you don't expect me to thank you for what I'm paying you to do - do you?! If you do something a bit more, I might think of thanking you. It's the old servant…. and I think we are afraid of that maybe in the west. But they did believe that at best I am a profitable servant and I'm paid to do a job therefore I should be doing that job to the best of my ability…and therefore, how can I do it any better? Now if I'm making widgets, and I'm employed to make 50 widgets a week and then somebody says, well if we pay you a bit more, can you make 60 widgets a week? I might think about it, but then I'm going to think, well how long can I go on….if somebody has worked out that it's reasonable to make 50 widgets a week, is it reasonable then to increase it by ten, unless they change the process? If somebody can physically only do 50, any incentive or appraisal is not going to make them do 60…there's got to be a change in the management…so hold on, why do you need an appraisal system to change the management? Do you see where I'm going? There used to be a reward scheme in the Steel Company of Wales – there was a suggestion box and they encouraged the staff to put in suggestions yeah? And if that suggestion, was adopted and there were savings made, they would get part of the 'profits’ – for want of a better word. They would be given a reward for making that suggestion. So that's possible, a possibility, so you are getting people to think more….mind you, they might be sitting there thinking more than they're doing their job!!! (SMGHOUM1)

A medal?! With all these different types of schemes – I don't know what sort of message is that giving? I think that's not the way to go. Performance related pay is difficult…. I really struggle with this rewarding thing, although probably a lot of people I would say, would welcome it, but that's me – I never attended my graduation ceremonies, never turned up to pick up the school prizes – I hate ceremonies – but I don't mean to be cynical about these things, but I think a lot of people would see these things – not myself of course - as a way of doing something which at least goes on file as a recognition. Maybe, there might be a little prize or something – like a book token, some kind of token so that they could think well yeah, I got the medal and had a free lunch – I don't know, there may be some mileage in it! And it could come up through the appraisal route and people could nominate, not nominate – yeah, I suppose it would be nominate! And it would also be a way of bringing the attention of people who are performing very well to higher managers, who can then clock who those people are, see that they are progressive and worth investing in, you know, rather than them having to do their own PR. (SMGHOUM5)
I come from a background where personal contracts were the norm – once you get beyond floor level if you like – and there was a true performance related pay system. That's my background and that's what I'm used to…and a bonus scheme and to me in the one sense, to have a detailed and complex review process without something at the end of it…..not to say you shouldn't have the review process, of course you should, but it's just my background and I just find it a little bit odd that you…..I mean it's fine at the moment, if you follow the development side of it and you've got a training requirement – and UL has a reasonably effective training mechanism in place, so if you can identify a weakness or a need, you've got a chance of satisfying that, but in terms of performance appraisal at the moment…..The trouble is, we all have needs, the hierarchical needs and yes OK, we all like the nice office and the hygiene factors and yes, we all like those. The reality is, what people want to see is something financial. Now whether that is cash, a bonus, vouchers…. I mean one thing that makes me cringe is when you go into shops and things and you see staff member of the month…. ‘Katie@TGI Fridays is staff member of the month’ and you think well…..as a customer I would expect them all to be good…I don't think ‘Oh I'll wait for the best waitress’, I want them all to be good and I think the hard part is that you've got three areas to mark a performance in. You've got acceptable, not acceptable or walking on water. Walking on water should receive some kind of recognition…even a letter from the VC which says we recognise what you've done, thank you. (SMGHOUM2)

I think we should reward good performance and dis-benefit poor performance. The role descriptors are wrong, for example, if you take my role, I need to work across UL – plug into the rest of the organisation – ‘work together with others’. May be reward should be linked to the Nolan Principles – so if you act selflessly, then you get an increase in your unit budget and if you don't, you get a cut in budget! Performance linked to an individual doesn't work, it has to be a team thing with promotions or progression schemes, or it leads to selfishness, non-accountability and a blame culture – we are here to help the business not the individual. (SMGHOUM7)

I think, well….there’s also the thank you and letting people know…that goes a long way. I mean our away days – I can't believe how much it mattered to people being that ‘employee of the year’ and you know, that sort of public acknowledgement. Oliver Wood has his star awards and they can all nominate from each other you know and all this sort of thing. So it isn't just the money, I know, but I still like the financial rewards – everyone's working for money – I think, so long as it's done in a fair way, because what you find is people are happy with equal misery, but once someone gets something better…oh you could rock the boat! But I like some form of reward and I think a good reward is the performance criteria for progression, I think that’s a good one because that’s something that is understood and you know, people can go for it in the same job and if they do, it’s motivating….. what was the question again?.... and I’m very much in favour of attendance for ummm in particular categories right across the board. I think it’s outlying, low paid services you know, where it makes a huge impact if…and where those people who are….we had this award with Dimitrov in
catering when we had the away day and where in six years, she hadn’t had a
day off and we said look, it’s not to say that – we all have sickness etc. – but
gosh, hasn’t that added, you know hasn’t that been helpful to us for six years
and everyone gave her a big clap and up she went and you know, we gave her
£100…yeah and why not!?  You think of the value that we’ve had from that sort
of thing – it’s recognition – it’s… I like it!  On the other hand it’s also got to be a
little bit fair, it’s got to be on a fair basis.  I think you can deal very easily with the
low paid basic front line staff, but if you are going to bring it into management
etc. I think you’ve got to do that with great care, or you are advantaging people
just by virtue of where they are and that doesn’t seem fair.  It’s got to be fairly
applied and it’s a bit of a minefield I suppose. (SMGHOUF9)

If they are doing their job – what they are supposed to be doing, then that’s that,
but when you’ve got people contributing more to the ‘UL effort’ that needs to be
recognised…well I think you’ve got to put ceilings on things and at the end of
the day, it could be a combination of things – I can’t think what, off the top of my
head, but it’s not just financial, there’s CPD and all that stuff. (SMGHOUF8)

Yeah, I think that would be a good idea!  Right, well, again… certain texts would
say that money isn’t the only motivator or whatever, but I think in realistic terms
it would have to be some sort of bonus scheme or…or whatever, I mean if it
were to finish with the line manager or whatever, saying well thanks very much
you’ve done a good job, then that’s fine, but it only goes so far doesn’t it? –
money isn’t the only motivator because there are things such as job satisfaction
and some plaudit from a job well done.  I mean that’s a sort of reward in itself,
but that’s coming from sort of within, isn’t it?  I mean you feel good because
you’ve done something well and whatever and you’ve got a little bit of pride with
that…but from an organisational point of view, if you want to reward your staff
there’s only so many times you can say thank you, well done, you’ve done a
good job.  It’s difficult to measure the performance I would suggest – I mean
talking about the mixture of how you measure it…that would be the difficult part
from an HR sort of perspective I would have thought – and to make it objective
as well, so that it isn’t just the feeling of the line manager or the designated
individual or the panel or whatever, like I say, some jobs are very difficult to
measure performance by anyway, aren’t they?  I mean if you’re a salesman and
your charged with selling say 50 cardigans or whatever and you do it, that’s it
then,- you’ve got your bonus.  But I mean a lot of what we do here isn’t
measurable in those terms is it?  I mean from an HR point of view, what are
your outputs really?  I mean if you try and measure Karkaroff or from a finance
perspective – what are our outputs really?  You could say you’ve met your target
or not – a lot of it is sort of the impression of the individual and you can get a lot
of sort of charismatic individuals, who impress, but when you look at what they
do, you might think well it doesn’t add up – it’s sort of being disguised if you like
isn’t it?  They might be very good at what they do - but they might not, but the
impression is that they’re very personable and they do very well. (SMGHOUUM3)

I think if people can to the same job at the same pay and then one can do it
much better… it can be divisive you know.  I mean there has been all this
argument Allison, and I think it’s settling down now, because it’s been a big
who-har, but if one is putting in far more effort and doing a better job and getting
better results, I mean you get job satisfaction, you get kudos for that. The
problem is, it can be divisive you know. But you know, we’ve had people in jobs
for many years getting well paid and not doing bugger all – and getting away
with it. Now there are very few I think, but your perception of a job and your
perception about whether you are working hard are totally different between
people. I mean, people may be absolutely overwhelmed with work and I don’t
know how they do it - you know? And it’s perception, perception. No time to do
anything...it’s how you organise yourself, you know. Well I think we’ve got
some things in place which give recognition....the Government is very keen on
this...as long as it’s not divisive, as long as somebody does something special
or well, why shouldn’t they be....you know that’s what it’s like in Education. You
go in, and what has every school got? An awards assembly every Friday
morning. If you’ve done something well, whether it’s back at home or in school
or even tidied up or picked up some litter or something special, or done
something which was a first, they get stood up and put into the front and they
get a little, get applauded – an accolade. I think we should do more of it – I’m
all for it...so long as it’s not divisive and so long as it’s not the same people all
the time that get everything, you know….praise is much better than sanctions.
(SMGOUM4)

No response - didn’t ask the question: SMGHOUM6
REWARDING PERFORMANCE

As a Dean of School, what are your views on rewarding good performance?

I think rewarding good performance is a good thing if it is managed sensitively. There is a difference between those that go the extra mile and what I call the flat liner. I think the types of benefits or rewards should include things like, time abatements for research etc., sabbatical leave, incremental funding with honorarium above it e.g. Director of Football involves an extra 15/10 hours a week worth of extra effort. (SMGHOSM12)

I am fundamentally against performance related pay. In a people based system, why should I get it, when I would have got it off the back of my team? Q - Are there other benefits that you think UL should be offering to staff? Absolutely, we have a ‘good news board’ and I like to see people praised a lot. I give praise out to people and I write to them and let them know I value what they have done, and I publish that and I think that buoys people up in terms of praise and helps to raise their self esteem. I also try and be flexible with staff time in terms of ‘you’ve done enough this week, I don’t want to see you after Friday lunchtime – bugger off!’ – and that would be with project staff more than academic staff – it’s just things like that and it’s….. in other words, it’s just trying to put money to people to sort of say well, OK, we can’t give you it in terms of income, but I’ll go over the top to support you, to grow you as a person and to tell you and to praise you and do that sort of stuff. And I mean, when have you ever heard anybody in the centre publicly praise anybody?...You haven’t, but why not? You should do – there should be a bloody e-based monthly magazine which says hey! Do you realize that Arthur’s done this and done that, you know. We get it through the U magazine but who writes the U magazine? We write the bloody U magazine – where’s Marketing going out? I mean, if you’ve got a reporter based in Marketing – one member of staff who’s like an investigative reporter, that goes around everybody and says ‘what’s the good news today?’ and where is our good news bulletin? Or where is our e-based university newspaper which says well this happened today and did you know Fred Weasley has got married?... and you’d have it in like a newspaper and you’d maybe even have ‘well the big burning issue is the academic re-structure’ – somebody could write that and do that and then you’d get a feeling of well, this is good – I actually know something about my organisation and I’ve never met Fred Weasley but I know he’s married and has got two kids and all that – do you know what I mean? You’d know about the people around you, and we don’t do that and it would be a few thousand pounds a year to get some ‘bright-eyed bushy-tailed’ Llareggub journalist who’s good on email or on the internet and bingo, away you go and it wouldn’t be the only thing you could do. I mean has Dumbledore ever written to anybody to tell them ‘very well done’?? Professor Umbridge had 30 years service this year and I wrote to Madame Pomfrey and said, do you realize that he’s got 30 years in? You know, you get a clock after 25 years and a fob watch in just about every other organisation going….and I never even got a reply. We don’t value our people….It's
disgustingly bad and you have to say whose fault is that and Karkaroff is Director of Human Resources. It’s not only about getting the people in, it’s about looking after them after they’re in. So that should be one of his responsibilities and/or he could think of other ideas and I mean we could do this as ideas in meetings and say OK, well that’s not a bad idea; how much would that cost? That wouldn’t cost much…..actually writing something wouldn’t cost you anything – it would cost you time. All we ever get are problems – solve the problems – not when it’s done, ‘well done’. We never even get that. So after a while, people perform accordingly, they don’t give you the discretionary effort. I mean this organisation could be absolutely fantastic – it’s got good people inside it – that’s a bit of rhetoric about how good we are!! (SMGHOSM10)

I think UL has got a very, very imperfect view of what people should do and I think it’s the nature of the business that we’re in. I mean it’s easy to know if your finance officer, or job x y z is done umm because it’s accountable in that sense – but not in a financial way, do you know what I mean? But when is the job of an academic done? It kind of flows here and it flows there…I mean there’s no kind of nine ‘til five-ish about it and actually for some people nine ‘til five turns into twelve ‘til twelve, for some people it turns into eleven ‘til two or twelve ‘til one – do you know what I mean? So you can seriously under invest in doing what needs to be done and still get away with the job. Now, for those people who are kind of high achievers - and that probably accounts for only one or two individuals- those are the ones that you’d want to be rewarding. You’d want to almost….people should be paid a fair days pay for a fair days work, but I sometimes feel – even looking at my own position in this, there’s things I do, like for example I enjoy projects, and yet as HOS I’m not supposed to do projects. Well, if I do a project….if somebody else does a project they can get rewarded in the reward scheme at the moment, but I can’t get rewarded, and I think that’s inequitable, I think it’s inappropriate. So I think we’ve got to look at a system that actually encourages people to test their jobs – I think it’s important that we work through this model and that we have a model and then we can see where people are doing their jobs and when they’re not doing their jobs and what that means in real terms. But sometimes it would be lovely to know that my job was nine ‘til five and that if I did my job in those times, so when I go outside those times, like if I write a book, that I can get rewarded for those and that would incentivise those who…I mean I’m a hard working individual, umm and I take my job very seriously so…but then I know there are people around me who don’t, but they get away with blue murder because the whole thing isn’t defined at a corporate level, so I think there’s issues about it. Q - What sorts of things should UL be using to reward staff? I wouldn’t discount money. I mean it is a very tangible way of showing status and it’s something that people understand, so you know, I might be the best HOS in the world, but if I don’t drive around in my flash car or wear my designer clothes then I’m not seen to be…so there’s something about success. For me respect is very, very important and feeling valued as a human being is very important and that sort of thing – so what does that mean in real terms? Well, I suppose it’s about trust. I mean we’ve got a very flexible job and when it’s flexible and it eats into my time that’s fine but when it’s flexible and I eat into their time…so say I work all
weekend, and I’m not in on a Monday morning and I get phone calls...she’s not there again, oh my God.... So you know, the fact that she’s worked all weekend, do you know what I mean? The very flexibility of the job...I think they need to have much more understanding of what happens in the actual schools and what and how people contribute to those sorts of things....so if I’m talking about it from my own perspective, err I wouldn’t discount money, err but there’s a load of other things as well...yeah it would be nice to have....I don’t know if I would want private health care...because these are some of the sorts of things they use aren’t they? You know, does my job take long because I am slow at doing it? And I think those are the things that need to be explored against each individual....because you know, I think if they're blooming slow at doing it, they shouldn’t be paid for it! But I mean sometimes it’s an issue of working overtime and not being rewarded for it at all... I mean I think there’s also an issue about things like the European Working Directive and you know, I do think that for both positive and negative reasons that impacts ultimately on health and stuff like that...so I think there has got to be much more understanding about HR practice and things like that and I would like to see much more flexible benefits rather than financial benefits, but it’s also important to say that’s a job well done! (SMGHOSF17).

I think in this particular school, at this particular time, it would be folly to say anything other that it needs to be a reward. Part of the reason for that, is that out of 45 academic members of staff in the school and if the role of course director carried an extra – I don’t know, £2000 per year or whatever it is then....in a sense, you see what’s happening is the delegation of the resource into the school. It’s not that they’re not get the money, they’re not financially getting the money but the school is subsidising – I mean once you give somebody 100 hours remission for running a large course – 100 hours is a lot of time and you’ve then got to pay out for somebody else. You’re still paying them, it’s just coming from a different pot and you’re not actually physically paying them, your paying somebody else to do what it is they would have been doing otherwise...why not just give them the money – it would be a lot less complicated! Have two less people in the RAM or whatever, stick the money in the pot and just give them the money. That’s what we are talking about, and because we don’t actually do that, we think we’re not doing it but we are doing it! Normally people teach just over 400 hours; well that resource is being carried by the school..... (SMGHOSM11)

It’s not necessarily a financial reward, I think extracting appreciation is very important although there comes a time when that is not enough and in fact if you express appreciation too much, then people will go and say ‘well I deserve a promotion because you keep saying how good I am!’ So I certainly think they should be rewarded, but not necessarily financially – and I think it’s because I don’t have any control over that.... I couldn’t say. I don’t think UL, and I don’t think it’s the only institution, is very good at rewarding people because what people see is people getting rewarded for the wrong things. So, what always used to happen when I first came here, is that people who couldn’t teach were kicked upstairs …so you had managers who...most people who can’t teach end
up on the shelf and not in any managerial role and that is always what we used to see… and you do get a bit of that where people are found things to do, which other people might really want to do and do very well, but because they are already very good at what they are already doing, then that’s where they are. (SMGHOSF16)

I think it’s very difficult to beat good old fashioned money myself. I think it gives you more in control of your destiny as well, which people like. I mean you could probably bribe people by saying err they can get a day off a week for research, but actually we do that for everyone in the school anyway! Linking performance to pay? I’m not very much in favour of it. I think that you should reward good performance by promotion and people who teach well and lecture well, could possibly be promoted to leaders and people who administer well should be bumped up the scale. I mean, I don’t understand the local government grading scales – you get course directors who are lecturers on a grade one err you get people who do nothing at all who are principle lecturers, so there’s no rhyme nor reason for it at all. What we should be saying is that good performance gets you recognised. Once you have agreed that you will reward good performance rather than punishing poor performance, then you should come up with some strict objective criteria that will enable you to do it, as for example, can you, taking the same input of students, actually improve the learning outcomes for those students? And then get an external verifier….obviously you’d give people the right to mark themselves into a principal lectureship – and it won’t take very long for them to do it…they like to think they are doing the right thing, but the right thing by themselves. There is a hell of a difference between someone who does it adequately - and you can’t complain - and somebody who does it really well. (SMGHOSM14)

When I was rewarded for my good performance in the States, it really was a sharing of the profits in the form of a very tasty cheque…. and I really did enjoy it…how much did I earn? Around 50 or 40 thousand. In the PRP system in the re-structuring document it was hopeless – a maximum of 5% against target so the maximum I could earn was £2400, (based on 48K), take away £1000 for tax and pension contribution OK and you’re down to less than a thousand pounds or £20 per week. I spend more that £20 per week at my local Indian takeaway when I do late nights in the office! I think that a proper sabbatical system, if we had a system that rewarded that academic engagement with learning and teaching would be something that would benefit UL. (SMGHOSM13)

Ah, I think UL is very bad! No, I think good work needs to be rewarded. I think this is one of the main reasons…..I see it in the school where people say, well what’s the point – if I work hard or I don’t work hard I’ve still got the same salary, so why am I working hard? I think good work needs to be rewarded. I think performance, achievement against targets, innovation – coming up with new ideas new things, contribution to the school strategies, to the school. I think money, I think money is the best incentive. Well, I prefer money because I can do whatever I like with it – buy insurance or buy a holiday. I think something very specific so that if people are performing well we could send
them to conference or buy them a lap top to do their work…..or more work at home or something like that. (SMGHOSM15)
ANY OTHER COMMENT YOU MAY HAVE IN RELATION TO THE WHOLE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT DEBATE?

I have learnt how to be a good strategic manager as I have gone along. I also manage my budgets well and yet I have never read a book on it, it’s just something that you develop as you go along. It would be useful if there was someway of helping you appreciate how you do what you do. Most staff are very bright and academically able. They are competitive by nature and tend to have big egos. This has to be managed very positively. If you managed by authority you would end up in a very confrontational situation. It’s far better to manager through consensus. (SMGHOSM12)

We need to be skilled in dealing with problems as they occur, or else the problems just snowball. Training in dealing with difficult situations would help, when you look under the carpet there’s a can of worms. It would be good to be able to share experiences with other experienced managers. There is a lot of watching your back or knifing others that goes on and this needs to be resolved – perhaps we need to go back to the Nolan Principals. (SMGHOUM7)

But it’s always been curious to me, with all these things that happen in schools, why don’t they happen in higher education? They’re the same in a way – we’ve just got senior students rather than children. But human beings all work in a similar way – we all like praise, we like to see that we are doing a good job, I think and I think that where it can become part of a problem, because it’s all about care, and if you’ve got to tell them off, you tell them off and if you’ve got to reward them, you reward them and the balance should always be more towards reward. But if you’ve got to tell them off, you’ve got to tell them off……whatever age; we’re all human beings aren’t we? We all have the same emotions and things. (SMGHOUM4)

Well I think my – I’ve been in UL for about seven years now – and one of the things that I think there is a weakness with, is that there is no definition or clear boarder between the responsibilities of different people – there’s always overlap of the responsibilities, and there’s always…you don’t know who to ask, err to do things, because it all overlaps. In my view, I think defining clear boarders of responsibility is very helpful. (SMGHOSM15)
SECTION THREE

Performance Conversations

Performance Management Survey
Results from UL’s Middle Managers

April 2009
SECTION THREE: PERFORMANCE CONVERSATIONS – PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SURVEY RESULTS FROM UL’S MIDDLE MANAGERS

Q1. What do you understand by the term ‘Performance Management’?

I understand performance management to be a system or structure that evaluates your work/dept performance in structured areas such as people/financial/plans/targets etc.

Developing and improving performance through appraisal, training and continuous review.

Performance management is the "Manager" ensuring that the "staff member" is aware of the targets that have been set jointly and working to achieve those goals. The performance of the individual is then evaluated against the action plan drawn up to help achieve the agreed targets.

I understand Performance Management to mean the management of performance e.g. praising staff when they do well and assisting staff to do better when do not meet working standards/requirements. Training is a key player in performance management because staff need to be suitably trained in order to undertake performance management and to be performance managed. The introduction of performance management can be a huge culture change for some companies and the fall out can be enormous if the systems and processes are not clear, constantly communicated and a clear line of training provided to underpin the new process of performance management.

The concept of managing the resources of an organisation to achieve the most efficient and effective outcome in order to meet strategic objectives. I believe, however, that by introducing the Rewards scheme, UL is moving towards not only managing performance but managing people's behaviour.

Managing the performance of individual staff against previously agreed targets which relate to personal development and the institutional targets.

Performance management includes activities to ensure that goals are consistently being met in an effective and efficient manner.

The process of quantifying performance measurement or of setting the expected performance standard.

A company/manager/team member involving its employees/working together to improve organisational effectiveness.
Managing the performance of individuals to the benefit of the organisation and themselves - (achieving aims/goals etc) when the two combine you get the best results.

Management tools and methods whose aim is to improve organisational performance-and to reward it when present.

No idea! May be helping people to do their work effectively?

The first concept which springs to my mind when "performance management" is mentioned is that of cohering all of the resource of an organisation or sub-unit into the achievement of key objectives. This of course presupposes adequate leadership and communication of these objectives in order to succeed. One can, however, envisage a very different understanding of the terminology amongst colleagues within this institution. They will associate the terminology with unwanted management intervention and concepts such as "time/motion" studies. Thus, I suppose, one's understanding of the term will very much be dependent upon one's place in the organisation, the culture of the work environment and the levels of understanding about what the organisation seeks to achieve.

Managing people and/or resources to achieve a specified performance.

Management systems to ensure staff potential is fully met and utilised for the mutual benefit of both the institution/organisation and the individual.

A complete structure to allow performance to be monitored, analysed and improved in a way that benefits both the individual and the organisation. A framework to support individuals to develop new skills, and to move into positions which will utilise their strengths, for example managers need to have access to a variety of roles to develop a balance of strengths, in staffing, financial, and resource management. The structure needs to be supported by a good selection of training which should be available at regular intervals, and should be challenging and should motivate staff to want to develop further.

To review the performance of an individual working or a project undertaken within an organisation and to make necessary adjustments to either ensure that the individual or project meets pre-agreed objectives; or to review objectives to take into account new developments (opportunities, threat) which have been identified as a result of the review.

Enabling and ensuring staff carry out tasks as described by job/role description to the highest standard possible.

The measurement of individual performance or team outputs against agreed objectives which aims to improve overall organisational results/performance.
The term "performance management" means having a planned and relevant training programme, a method for reviewing performance over a given period, reviewing and updating training needs, assessing subsequent impact of training undertaken on performance for both the employee as an individual and UL as an employer.

Setting performance objectives for a managed area. Identifying the skills and tools required to achieve the set objectives. Checking progress and identifying areas of failure and the action required if the objectives are not achieved.

Assessing and monitoring the performance of staff members in terms of how well they have responded to and met targets and other pre-determined goals associated with their role within the team. This would also include presenting suitable responses to good/poor performance, for example development and training, and conducting regular staff reviews to discuss performance.

Monitoring the performance of a team or individual to set indicators/ criteria that contribute to the success of an organisation.

Coaching performance to ensure optimum output.


Not a clue....it's not the sort of language I would use...I suspect for me it is monitoring and managing all systems and outputs that are crucial to the life of this course, and making sure there is clear line management within the School and up into UL admin, and that for the team, role definition and duties for me and my staff team need to be clear and evaluated regularly. Since I am unclear about your definition then answering the questions below becomes a bit tricky.

ECU management configured for performance rather than economy, but since that is engineering related and you're not, then it must mean something different to you. Ah, ok reading forward a bit, you are using it to describe the process of monitoring, evaluating and increasing output of staff. Since I am relatively new here I am not in a position to comment on UL policy, except that I hope that it isn't a "one size fits all" approach. I lead by example, encourage motivate and reward performance. In my experience, the big stick approach does not work over a long term period.

It's a management process which organisations use in setting/monitoring the development/accomplishment of performance targets.

How we as a University and on a personal level manage and measure our performance.
Achieving agreed objectives.

The setting, monitoring and assessment of individual or corporate objectives.

Not much - could be managing one’s own performance or managing the performance of others. The next question implies the latter.

Ensuring that all staff are aware of what is expected of them in their role, including any specific targets or measure associated with performance. Ensuring that mechanisms are in place to review performance against these expectations, to address shortcomings and recognise good practice.

That staff are rewarded according to their ability to meet set objectives.

Performance management is one of the tools for ensuring that an organisation is working together towards common goals and the achievement of strategy. Performance management should begin at the highest level and be cascaded down through the organisation. A front line member of staff should be able to identify how their individual goals and targets contribute to the achievement of the strategy. Performance management should provide a monitor of progress against goals and be regular, systematic and fair. In order for a performance management system to be taken seriously and implemented evenly, linking it to a rewards system can provide additional impetus.

Where a manager ensures that stated target are met. Supported by incentives or penalties.

Managing the performance of staff, yourself and the Dept in general.

Pro-active management of staff performance through agreed objectives using the Staff Review and Development Scheme and linking to corporate objectives. Performance linked closely to staff development and training needs to support delivery of objectives.

Evaluating the performance of individuals and schools against a predetermined set of criteria. The provision to take action in cases of good or poor performance.

Management by reviewing performance against objectives and exploring support means to encourage improved performance where required and development of full potential for the benefit of both the organisation the ‘team’ and the individual.
1. A clear mechanism for supporting the development of staff. 2. Monitor the standing of teaching. 3. Track self and programme evaluation. 4. To evidence best practice and specialist skills. 5. A clear mechanism to address skills short comings, support issues and lecturing skills.

Management that is underpinned by continued and relevant training and that is filtered where appropriate to staff within that individuals dept or academic school.

Managing staff and resources efficiently and effectively to achieve corporate objectives.

Management of staff/ student/ programme performance, including collection & collation of data, communication of good/ bad practice, strategies for short & long term improvement/ development policies, and feedback methods of information.
**Q2. In your opinion, which of the following statements best describes UL’s approach to Performance Management?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of approach</th>
<th>Numbers of managers</th>
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<tr>
<td>A clear strategy</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A general approach</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A few initiatives</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No policies</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Q3. How would you describe the culture in your school/unit?**

*I feel that there is a good culture in our unit.*

*In the throes of change - there's a lack of understanding of other work cultures elsewhere which has led to some complacency, rather inward looking.*

*All staff are familiar with the concept of performance management as it is something that is embedded in primary schools and secondary schools. However, the processes in UL and therefore the school seem to be constantly changing and often have little impact on the personal development of individual staff or the development of the school. I feel that this sometimes happens on an ad hoc basis. I would also imagine that it is something that is potentially threatening to some staff rather than being seen as an opportunity to be supported in carrying out one's responsibilities and taking control of professional development.*

*This is very difficult to assess in any meaningful way as the school has not existed for very long.*

*Stressed and with a complete lack of communication at all levels of management. The school has become disjointed since the merger of Herbology and the Dark Arts and is being managed ineffectively.*

*We are target driven and appraised against our targets.*
The culture in our school is proactive and challenging. We are beginning to build a team with one central visionary aim but there is some way to go. Management, ownership and understanding of the bigger picture in UL is required as a training need. More self praise is needed from within the school to celebrate our successes. In general at school level and at UL level there needs to be more co-ordination across departmental barriers to progress swift and successful change. At present there appears to be too many little things taking up staff time so the bigger projects are lost in the minutia of paperwork, information sharing is of high importance in change any school or UL culture.

I feel that the prevalent culture within Student Services (although it does vary amongst teams) is one of role culture as functions are defined in a formal way and staff specialise. This, in my opinion, governs the way that 'we' manage performance in that we work with a team of specialists, who know what is required of them and are professional enough to get on with it.

Excellent relations with practice-based students/staff. Good data collection/feedback/liaison interaction. Management support for improvement & development of staff/programme/research. Good appraisal of staff & job evaluation.

The culture in this department is driven mainly towards financial performance.

Keen on staff development but little formalised process.

Reasonably supportive.

Culture in school 1. Mechanism of Appraisal of staff in place. 2. Inadequate sharing of programme content, approaches and best practice 3. Imbalanced approach to the support of individual programmes within a school 4. Over load of administrative demands of programme leaders Culture in unit 1. Mechanism of Appraisal of staff in place 2. Good communication on teaching and learning 3. Good shared knowledge of the teaching of colleagues.

The formation of a new school is always a stressful time especially when the there is a disproportion in the size of the former schools being merged. Currently there is still an element of "wait and see" while staff try to establish how the new management structure will work.

Performance management issues are addressed over time. A constructive and open approach is encouraged.

Goodwill is rife. Academic staff take on a lot of extra work to ensure that the students and researchers are well supported. There are some staff who do not perform and there is no mechanism to address this in any meaningful manner.
Team based/objective led.

There is no cohesive culture within the school, except dissidence. There is a general view amongst the academic staff that they are unmanageable and they seem to work hard to make this a self-fulfilling prophecy. There are a core of staff who work very hard to make the school a success and who take on additional responsibility to make this happen but the lack of performance management means that good performance often goes unrewarded which can leave staff feeling under-valued and de-motivated.

New school, different practices. Pragmatic, voluntary approach in the past. Performance not monitored at all. New school management now conscious of benefit of better target setting.

A hard-working culture where staff go the extra mile to deliver results. It is, however, fairly inflexible in terms of part-time/job share work which means valued members of staff feel they must look for a new role outside UL if they wish to have a better work/life balance.

Staff teams create their own cultures.

All staff contribute to the direction, development and delivery of the team’s operational plan, which gives them ownership and a sense of responsibility in delivering the outcomes. Performance management has become a team culture, with all staff working together to meet targets and helping each other out when difficulties arise. This means that staff usually draw the team’s attention to their own difficulties in meeting their personal performance targets. The management of the process requires a fairly light touch, with regular checks on progress and occasional redirection or correction.

Fairly good communication, but struggling to come to terms with different cultures following re-configuration of schools.

Each member of staff works to the same set of rules, which means parents and children know how any given situation will be managed/handled.

There have been improvements to the overall planning process, for example, the Unit Development Plan leads to section plans. There are team staff development reviews which lead into individual reviews. The consultation on Unit planning amongst all staff could be enhanced.

Task oriented with an emphasis on quality and timeliness.
Tense but very communicative. Under huge stress but attempting to be very efficient: mood from top that you are always inadequate: little praise: impatience: managing under impossible conditions with no sense of a support from top management of UL. From there it feels like a blame culture and a bean counter culture that shows little understanding of the realities of our educational cultures and what is valued by students and our stakeholders. The mood culture comes from the top.

A group of dedicated, committed staff who, as engineers are always evaluating their performance and looking at continuous improvement within the restrictions imposed on them by external factors.

Professional, motivated and flexible to change.

It is key to the success and long term stability of the service we provide.

We do what we can within the time we have and the tools we are given.

Open door policy in that ideas and opinions are freely communicated.

In my unit as a whole there is a reasonable approach to performance management but this tends to then vary within its sub-sections: some having a very pro-active approach and others a negligible performance management culture.

The performance culture is based on the need to meet work based timetables. There is currently no formal structure in existence.

Management of individual staff performance is perceived as being important, but would perhaps benefit from being slightly more formalised. Other pressures within the unit seem to take precedence over performance management especially during peak times of year.
Mixed. The emerging research culture means that a culture of individualism is rising (research performance is primarily based on the endeavours of individuals and upon their status and reputation within their research field (peer-reviewed); therefore, such individuals are able to command more attention in pursuit of their individual objectives). However, this is not so advanced as in my last place of work. Other academic staff are divided into two categories. The 'new' academic, team-orientated, supportive of new learning and teaching challenges (e.g. PDPs; peer-reviewed teaching) and the 'older' academic who is protective of individual autonomy and resistant to the systems approach used increasing to measure output (rather than outcome) of education. Support staff have a different culture; many are 'old school' long-serving members of staff and do not seem to be realise that competition within the Sector has increased exponentially, therefore, their activity remains at a constant unchanging pace; others, primarily newer staff, are more willing to accept change; but tend to become disenchanted with the difficulties of implementing change and either leave; or sink into 'old school' style.

As educationalists many staff in the School are used to performance management approaches if they have come from school background, but until now we have had little opportunity within the School to make the crucial link between staff reviews and performance management as until recently it was not necessarily the line manager conducting staff reviews. Therefore almost impossible to get direct accountability. This might improve with new line management system.

One where people are reluctant to 'manage' or be managed and assume that academic privilege - such as a history of being granted flexible working, working from home etc - means they are exempt from having their performance managed formally against the strategic and operational priorities of the School and of UL.

A team orientated culture with input from all members encouraged and appreciated.

It is not really fair to comment on this yet as the newly merged school only started functioning properly in the last two months. It is evident that there is a merger of two quite different cultures so it will take some time for the new school to settle. My answer to Q3 above is also related to this point.
There is a great deal of poor performance which is very difficult to tackle - this de-motivates the strong performers within the area. Many managers who have been in the organisation for a long period have tried to tackle this previously and have had little support therefore the processes seem pointless. There is very little that can be offered to good performers to motivate them further. There is a lot of effort put in by managers and staff for small returns, a lot of time is spent on meetings to go through the motions of having a structure but the results do not reflect the amount of time spent by all parties on this.

Confused - we have recruited well this year in our section, substantial number of PhD completions and consultancy, but yet our funding has been reduced - what reward for performance?

There is no official or systematic performance management (as I understand the term) but we support each other fully, share best practice and rotate admin, organisational and teaching roles. Although I have CD responsibility, most decisions are democratically made, and workload/performance issues dealt with co-operatively. On the rare occasions where problems are intractable, the problem is reported to SMPT.

The unit is very small and does not encompass many managerial tiers. I would contend that the unit is focussed upon achieving the broad aims of the UL Boards and in meeting the specific bureaucratic imperatives of our stakeholders. We all know our roles in that system and we openly share our plans and achievements on a rolling basis. The culture, therefore, is one of openness, development and targeted achievement.
Q4. As a manager, how do you currently determine and communicate your performance requirements/expectations to staff within your area of responsibility?

I determine my requirements by reviewing previous performance and ensuring I am working towards the overall unit strategy. This is undertaken with all other managers within the unit along with the Head of Unit. I then produce a strategy for my area working with my team members and allocating areas to each individual all with start, review and completion dates.

Have set up whole new system of communications and brought staff into planning processes - some see the purpose of this rather better than others. Now have system of team meetings and regular meetings with each part of the work area and encourage staff to share information and issues too. Set up project working groups to help them work together on things and therefore see how others work.

I have only just taken on this role so have no experience of this as yet. I am a chair of governors in a school and as such frequently work with the head teacher to agree appropriate targets based on the school development plan and personal needs.

Staff meetings, individual meetings, email.

Monthly whole team meetings, monthly section meetings and more frequent technician demonstrator meetings. Also email.

I cascade the departmental targets that have been allocated to me and apportion them to my staff.

I have met with all my line reports on a 1-2-1 (one to one) basis and I discussed with the staff their wants, needs and expectations of their role. I have since been attempting to meet those expectations and make clear, visible internal changes so that staff can appreciate the positive move in the school. I also meet with the team as a whole monthly to communicate and discuss any corporate, local or individual issues. It is my plan to meet on another 1-2-1 with staff but decided to wait for the new performance management tool to be introduced. At my first 1-2-1s I asked for training needs and have implemented those where requested - I would repeat this request each time I met with an individual and longer term should be able to see an individual and team training plan come together - to meet the school/UL business needs.

Obviously the main tool for communicating performance requirements is the Staff Development and Review scheme where staff are set objectives on an annual basis. The objectives are extracted from the unit’s development/operational plans. Day to day requirements/objectives are communicated in several ways: by team meetings, informal chats etc etc.
Collation of all data - resources, student attendance/retention, results. Individual and team meeting/ discussions & written feedback. Set aims/targets/goals/outcomes (short & long term). Assess & review.

Appraisals/weekly managers’ meetings/Annual review and work in progress files for individuals.

Through team and one to one meetings.

Via regular 1-2-1s with all my staff, usually held monthly, Team meetings, again usually once a month, as well as the Staff Review process.

1. Team meetings - (module content planning, linkage etc) 2. Part time briefings at the start of the year (assessment benchmarks, studentship etc) 3. Staff appraisal process 4. Programme committee 5. Staff student liaison and feedback.

My requirements are determined in consultation with the senior management team [either face to face or by email]. Whenever possible I communicate directly with the staff I manage using informal meetings. To ensure all parties are clear about what is required I would normally then follow up with a written communication.

Frequent one to one meetings together with the formal staff review and development meetings.

Staff review scheme is the only system approved by the Union.

Annual objectives. Periodic team meetings. Regular review/discussions.

Following the merger of the two schools we are currently working to settle the scope of duties and responsibilities and then we will work towards a clear action plan for each member of staff, to be reviewed on a quarterly basis.

Frequent priority setting meetings. Fairly direct constructive discussions when expectations not met.

I hold regular one to one informal sessions to communicate what is expected of staff and to iron out any issues they may have. I give staff work objectives for short, medium and long-term action which we review together regularly. I also carry out probation and staff review sessions.

By staff review, day to day joint discussion and agreement.
The service has an overall plan, to which all staff contribute. Individual personal plans, with specific targets, are derived from the overall plan and these are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Standards of delivery are more complex and depend upon the work involved. For example, standards for reception work are covered during the induction of all staff and reminders sent to all staff (usually via email) if procedures are not adhered to by everyone. Standards for other work, such as guidance, are set by professional bodies and externally inspected, with regular internal meetings to ensure standards are being met.

Primarily through staff reviews.

A staff meeting is held at the beginning of each term, where these are discussed. Any issues that arise during the term are dealt with by discussion between myself and the relevant member of staff privately in the office.

There are agreed team objectives which are reviewed bi-monthly. There is then an annual team review facilitated by my line manager.

Though staff development meetings generally and specifically through regular, short one-to-one meetings. Emails are useful as starters or reminders but insufficient and inappropriate on their own. A localised version of MBWA is preferred.

We are a very close team: there is a lot of mutual respect and trust and a shared culture about quality and educational delivery philosophy. We have been together for quite some time and performance quality and expectation are simply understood. Most of us can multi task and cover for each other. We are physically close in that all our work spaces are close and we are in the middle of the student action. We are in regular contact and are comfortable pointing up poor performance if we feel this is so. We have formal annual big get together to formally review all aspects of the course these are noted and become policy documents that are normally submitted as parts of the course committee and exams committee processes. Since everyone is working way beyond their contracts to ensure maintenance of quality for a product whose resources have been cut and cut and cut over the last five years, it is a case of running to stand still. But we all know what quality is expected. We have (but not recently) done one to one staff reviews within the team to map out future desires and pick up any deeper worries.

Through group and individual meetings, e-mails. Setting targets and deadlines. Generating a team culture puts the onus on the individual to meet the requirements.

Objectives are set through shared dialogue and performance requirements agreed collectively.
Through 1-2-1s, Personal reviews, Away Days, Induction and ensuring that staff know what is expected of them and most importantly why.

Review, job descriptions, 1-2-1s, team meetings etc.

Staff reviews, 1-2-1s, Open door policy concerning communication.

Through discussion, individual meetings and use of training matrices to assess requirements.

Currently this is based on the annual staff appraisal procedure. The performance requirements are discussed and agreed during the appraisal programme.

Regular meetings either in sub-groups within the unit or on a one to one basis with individual staff members.

At present, this is under review. The Head of School has asked for a system/process to be developed which links School-level strategic aims with team goals and individuals objectives. With regard to those who are directly line managed by myself, this consists of informal quarterly reviews (in the absence of any system of formal appraisal) but is seen as a precursor to the anticipated roll out of a formal appraisal.

As Director of Enterprise I have a particular difficulty with this (which we have acknowledged and discussed at MPT). I can give staff clear expectations about involvement in particular enterprise activity - but by the very nature of this work for most staff, these activities are peripheral (or additional) to their main job / role. For those few staff who have exclusively enterprise remits then it is easier to clarify role descriptions, expectations and performance requirements, by for example setting clear goals and deadlines.

Currently, this is done via one to one or team meetings and day to day interface in which expectations and requirements are discussed or laid down in light of agreed School priorities, which can change according to current developments on the ground. I have indicated that once staff are inducted into their new or re-structured roles that we will be setting core personal and developmental objectives.

I do not have any direct staff. Performance targets in relation to achievement of a number of KTPs are well understood by the staff I deal with within the schools and I communicate my expectations directly with them, preferably, and for the most part, face to face. My expectations are more in the way of correctly filled in forms, timely submissions and where necessary, if they need it, I will assist with this.
Staff meetings are held to discuss shared responsibilities, teaching workload etc. As Programme Director I do not feel I have authority to instruct my colleagues with work directives or the like. We operate based on mutual trust and agreement as equals.

I hold monthly meetings with my team, both individual and team, we utilise the SDR documentation to target individuals and look at their strengths, and make every effort to encourage development of these individuals within the team.

Not required to do so - and have not been directed to do so - I would happily discuss these points with you.

I speak to them: general or ongoing issues are raised at informal Staff Meetings; workload/timetabling is discussed at a formal Timetabling Meeting; individual issues are discussed in one-to-one meetings. We all share a single staff room so dialogue is constant. There is also a culture of shared values which makes discussion and problem-solving relatively easy.

I am not a "line manager" but am involved in the coaxing, coaching and influencing of staff at all levels within UL. This is managed, again, through open discussion about the expected end result and a process of deliberation as to how this will be achieved. Key milestones are set and this ensures that deadlines are met. Poor performance, usually expressed in non-compliance (understandable too given the multiplicity of demands upon peoples time and the, often, bureaucratic nature of our requests), is dealt with in the first instance through conversation and email coaxing. This is elevated to line management in the unusual instances where progress is impossible.
Q5. Please describe briefly how you currently measure and report on performance within your school/unit

From a unit strategy all points have a start, review and completion date so are monitored all the way through. This information is then fed back to all managers within the department along with the Head of Dept.

Reports of performance of work of whole Unit go through UL committees and individually there are appraisals. Ask team for their contributions to reporting processes so this involves all team as far as possible. Measure of performance is 'did they achieve their targets' but is also informed by other things - e.g. perceptions of staff external to the Unit. Recently have talked with all major stakeholders to gain their perceptions.

Insufficient time in post.

I only measure and report on the staff I line manage. I keep paper records of my meetings and electronic file notes where necessary. I requested the attendee to complete an information form before they saw me and I used that information as the basis for our discussions. Any issues raised were taken to the Dean for further debate and discussion. Out of these meetings I have changed a number of job descriptions, promoted some staff, regarded some staff and have tabled a plan to undertake the rest - in priority order both for the individual needs and the business needs of the school.

On a formal level, the managers report to the Dean of Students, providing an update on progress against plans. In terms of customer satisfaction/feedback, the services carry out satisfaction surveys amongst students and make any necessary modifications in response to negative feedback (if realistic and possible within budget constraints). I would also carry out informal measures simply by listening to colleagues in telephone exchanges and in their interactions with students, other colleagues etc. I also monitor the level of complaints to ensure that it remains at zero.

Not applicable at the current time.

Staff complete module evaluation reports for every module that they deliver. These reports include reflection on things that went well and those that didn’t / Staff annual reviews, Peer reviews, Learning and teaching meetings, Annual course reports.

Staff Review & Development Scheme, although we are expecting and waiting for a new staff appraisal system which should give us the necessary tools to measure and report on performance.

Via staff review, student feedback, the APR, periodic review, external inspection and the annual external examiner's reports.
Reporting as in 5 above. Measured generally against timetable and through internal and external audits.

Performance is measured, by parental satisfaction sheets, which are given out at the end of each term, these give us an insight into whether we are providing the right level of service. Any issues arising from these is discussed among the staff and any changes implemented. Changes are notified in the parent newsletter.

The actions within the Development Plan are monitored and reported on in subsequent year’s plans.

As in answer to question 5

Annual staff development review, with mid year review, to look at overall targets. Regular contact with all staff to ensure they are coping well with their workload/targets and to address any support needs. Annual report from myself to line manager on progress towards targets, with monthly meetings at which problems can be raised. Externally funded contracts with quantitative targets reviewed monthly and reported quarterly to HEFCW.

Performance is not currently measured or reported and poor performance is managed by exception.

Reports to various school management, School R&E and RE unit meetings.

Largely on feedback – e.g. media coverage and contact building, comments and attendance at open days etc.

Use Staff Review & Development Scheme and informal feedback.

Staff review on an individual level. Student recruitment and budget spends.

Annual review with individuals, measure project outcomes against targets, (cost, time, satisfaction) post project reviews, reports to head of unit.

We hold regular manager meetings, fortnightly, where concerns and developments are discussed and action points identified.

Still at the early stages of implementation of the new management structure. However I anticipate that the Staff review scheme will be at the heart of managing the performance of staff.

Programme strengths/weaknesses. Response to External Examiners' reports and team review ideas. Quality of Degree results and end of year showcase. Professional liaison with consultants/contemporary practitioners. Student/staff meetings Staff reviews & informal peer review Student written feedback/meetings Programme Committee meetings Annual Programme Report/Progress report.

As we are financially driven our end of year accounts are the main indicator of our performance.

There are regular meetings where major targets are discussed and progress measured.

I have looked at staff student ratio, and more importantly gross income per staff member. This information was not readily available, but works out at over 100k per staff member in ESD. Similar information from other groups would be very useful.

Through regular periodic review of set objectives and the staff review system.

Annual course reports and all their statistical measurements. Quinquennial reviews: course committees: to School Management Planning Team meeting when requested. All L+T and research committee meetings. Collate views as UCU rep from staff in other programmes and bring to School management.

Review.

It is important to discuss gaps between what is achieved and what was expected of staff in order to improve performance - this can be done without the existence of a formal procedure but it helps. At the moment the absence of formal objective setting means it is difficult to monitor overall staff performance across departments.

As above use of questionnaires, focus groups for applicants.

Through periodic review and pro forma reporting.

Currently there is no formal measurement of performance. The main measure of performance is based on the feedback received from our internal and external customers.
This is perhaps where we would benefit from having a more formalised policy in place. Since I am largely responsible for marketing staff, however, performance is usually monitored in terms of target numbers and enrolment figures as well as how well individual staff members have responded to strategies set for various markets. Performance is discussed and reported on predominantly in an informal manner.

Regular reports, review of statistics, discussion on findings, measure against targets set.

As yet have never done any measurements or reports-in future staff reviews.

Other than through the existing Staff Development system (which I assume is still running) I don't measure or report on performance. I think that all the team share the responsibility for our performance as a team rather than it being a hierarchical system which assumes that the CD is the only one capable of mentoring or critiquing performance. Hence my 'yes' 'no' answer to Q10.

Measurement of each school performance is relatively simple in terms of KTPs. Have they been in discussion with any companies/organisations, are they progressing any applications? I report on the situation within each school as to their progress towards achieving their targets. I 'report' on a weekly basis at our team meetings and more formally through the Unit's manager to the R&E Board.

Performance of the course is reported through course committees and Annual Programme Reports.

Within the unit we set annual objectives through the staff review scheme. This is a useful exercise in reflection and planning. On an operational basis we provide each other with weekly iterations of our workload plans and, given the small-scale nature of the team, have regular conversations. This enables the team to ensure that all deadlines are met using the resources to hand in the most effective way.

There is no formal structure to do this. We have a couple of awards made at away-days; we usually let the staff vote for these.
Strategic: 1. Student intake (measured against targets) 2. Employability of students. 3. Progression of students. 4. Quality of courses (via professional accreditation/review and University-level reviews (APR, Quinquennial Review, QAA Institutional Review). 5. Relevance of courses with industry bodies (sometimes via professional accreditation; sometimes through feedback meetings with representatives of the NHS). 6. National Student Satisfaction Survey. 7. Level of students admitted from low participation neighbourhoods. 8. Financial viability/health. 9. Profits derived from research and enterprise activity. 10. Level of staff absence. 11. Level of staff/student complaints. 12. Level of other complaints (contention ratio?). Individual: Not known. At the moment we do not yet have a mechanism which links these strategic aims with team goals and individual objectives.

With the recent re-structuring, and merger of two schools, we have just created new centres within the School and have now identified line management responsibilities within those centres. This should give more opportunity to measure and report on performance using appropriate evidence e.g. for a Programme Director we might use, recruitment targets, students evaluations, external examiner reports etc. however, this does not solve the problem with regard to staff participation in enterprise activities as outlined above.
Q6. As a manager, please describe how you currently recognise good performance at individual/team level

Praise for those who achieve their targets and teams that achieve targets - occasionally go out for meals which I pay for.

Target numbers in terms of the marketing staff and student satisfaction in terms of the welfare and support staff. Both team and individual performance are assessed and taken into consideration.

Meeting objectives re time, quantity etc. Also student feedback acquired via a variety of evaluation methods.

Don’t really understand the question. General approach to constantly praise and thank team members when things get done to expected standards and even if not to standard, if they are doing their best under trying circumstances.

Meeting objectives/targets i.e. turning around ‘overs’ within 48 hours Feedback from users of service.

Someone who meets targets, deadlines, is well presented and represents the group and university, is proactive in attracting funds.

By personally acknowledging that good performance and telling others of the good work being carried out by the Team/Individual.

Primarily by telling individuals or teams face to face, though often also via a group e-mail, e.g. to thank a team for their efforts in organising an event. Where an individual works consistently at a level beyond their role, I try to ensure that this is recognised through either a regarding of the role or opportunities for future promotion. However, this is a very difficult area, particularly in relation to funding and EO issues. At present it is usually very difficult to reward good performance with anything other than words.

Dedication, communication, thoroughness, quality of outcomes.

Only by ‘thank you’ and ‘well done’.

Monthly team meetings and monthly individual meetings are used to check progress against agreed actions and objectives.

By praise aimed at either an individual or to the whole team. I ensure that this is given when warranted, although I would like some sort of incentive scheme, with rewards, other that verbal praise.

Good performance is recognised if the timetabled work for a period is achieved.
Through individual review and recognition and team discussions.

At an individual level, it is often the case that I offer immediate verbal or written praise for a job fulfilled quickly or a job well done. It is also the case that someone who performs well is then given greater autonomy or ownership of other tasks and problems which is a different way to acknowledge previous good performance. However, I also ensure that the staff in my area have their inputs or achievements recognised among other teams, for example acknowledging their suggestions and input at management team meetings.

Publicly celebrate successes and share best practice - at team meetings, by e-mail etc. "Good" performance has to be identified in relation to original brief / goals and usually refers to standard of achievement of those goals.

Individual:- informing those staff directly responsible to me in one-to-one face-to-face meetings of incidents which are considered to be good performance (praise). School level:- sometimes reported at SMPT; noted in minutes. It is currently incumbent on staff to read minutes to unearth recognition of good performance; however, a communications strategy audit is currently underway to determine what other better methods of communication might be applied within the School.

I give regular feedback to members of the team, and encourage participation and personal development. I encourage individuals to look at their career development and their personal goals and to take opportunities to learn and develop new skills whenever the opportunity arises.

Through peer review of teaching mainly.

This is not really relevant to my position although it appears to me that managers in our Unit do a fairly good job of recognising when an individual puts in a good performance and tells them so.

Open, honest feedback.

If you mean how it is acknowledged (as opposed to how do I realise it is happening) the answer is: through appreciation and praise - generally public rather than private. Sometimes accompanied by chocolate, biscuits or a handmade 'super-star' badge. Sometimes included in CCM minutes or raised at EBs.

Verbal and written comments and good references.
1. Teaching Preparation (content), organisation, punctuality etc 2. Use of Blackboard 3. Comprehensive notation of student’s work and student feedback 4. Student module evaluation and tutorials 5. Staff module evaluation 6. End of year meetings to discussion module evaluation and possible moderations with the team.

Feedback from colleagues, students and enterprise clients. Achievements acknowledged in minutes of meetings.

I have good communication with my staff via their 1-2-1s and I always praise for any projects that have been completed particularly well, or under difficult circumstances. I also advise my Dept Head if a particular individual has excelled, and in turn they also praise their work, which staff have confirmed they find motivational and rewarding that their achievement has been noted.

Observe ALL outcomes - quality, student progression, programme outcome, student feedback, staff development Listen, with regular formal and informal meetings with all parties involved - student body/ team & individual/staff reviews. Offer written feedback information - questionnaires/feedback sheets etc Respond to written feedback - open policy. Improved working relationships/student liaison & satisfaction/development of programme/staff expertise/external examiner's report/degree results.

By ensuring that people are thanked and congratulated for a job well done.

I've only just become a manager so I can't comment on this yet.

Positive feedback. Support for relevant training/staff development.

By writing favourable probation reports/face-to-face feedback, encouraging group emails etc.

Plenty of verbal praise.

Feedback in team meetings and at one to one meetings.

Again - as in question 5 but also at regular team meetings and academic debate days.

I like to congratulate staff in team meetings for work done well.

Praise.
We recognise individual performance through the appraisal scheme. Our end of year team meeting is also a key part of how we communicate team performance.

Say thank you - as publicly as possible. Try to find/create opportunities for staff to develop, find money for them to go to external events; give them responsibility.

Within my section we hold regular meetings to discuss and evaluate all work where good performance is recognised and new/further action points are developed.

I have only been a manager for one month. I have not yet had the opportunity to meet all of the staff to develop a working system for setting performance standards and as such have not yet had to recognise good or bad performances. As a supervisor I have thanked individuals for good performance either in person or at team meetings. I have encouraged the Dean of School to thank individuals and teams that have performed well.

I'm unsure what the question means by "recognise". If it means "identify" then this is covered by the answers to question 6. If it means "reward" then this is more tenuous and is mainly by praise for good work or achievement. This is sometimes associated with delegation of additional responsibility for the area where the success was achieved.

Involvement in the work of the school. Commitment to priorities within the school. A knowledge and understanding of the wider professional context in which they work. A readiness and eagerness to engage in professional development. Working to deadlines. Contributing to a team. This can be gauged through discussions with staff, general observations in relation to their engagement, involvement in school initiatives, involvement in CPD, feedback from students and programme director if looking at teaching.

I assume that the referral to 'recognise' relates not to my ability to identify good performance but to acknowledge and reward it. I would do this by making sure that I let individuals/the team know that they've done a good job - a simple well done goes a long way. It's also important that any adverse circumstances are acknowledged when people have tried their hardest but circumstances outwith their control have scuppered the outcome. I also find that chocolate and cake work well ;) It's important that people feel valued and I try to ensure that my colleagues know that I value them. This has to be demonstrated by my interactions with people and the way that I treat them. It's counter-productive to tell people that they're valued when actions and the way in which people are treated belie this.
I recognise it by saying "thank you" both to the individual and at team meetings. I put forward Awards for Excellence forms. I have recently thanked a number of staff in a formal "opening" ceremony by giving gifts to staff as recognition for their special assistance in projects. This ceremony has been documented by marketing for U news and quotes taken and photos to be used for the school website. All external people to UL were also included so that any comments/photos taken could also be used by these people to promote themselves and their links with UL.
Q7. Please describe how you currently manage poor performance at individual/team level

Try to create positive opportunities first for them to respond too and encourage them to do this i.e. trust them to do/achieve something. If not working or needs a boost ask them for one -to one discussion then start moving things up the scale-meeting which is observed etc Basically try to tackle before ingrained but not always possible.

Again during regular team meetings poor performance is discussed if necessary to ensure we are all working to our potential and goal which is the unit strategy and subsequently the dept. strategy.

Previously as a supervisor I used to meet with the individual on a one to one basis or occasionally with their supervisor to discuss poor performance. I have not yet had to do this as a manager.

Individuals who are underperforming are normally interviewed, the reasons for the poor performance explored and a plan to improve the performance agreed. If it is a team issue then the same sort of thing happens but on a team basis.

Not done at present - can only speculate. Important to communicate concerns early and to agree identify areas of poor performance. Needs to be a shared understanding based on hard evidence and not anecdotal evidence. Important to put support in place for poor performance and SMART targets agreed by all parties. NB some of the responses to 10 and 11 are aspirational as I have not yet had sufficient opportunity to engage in this approach. We have only recently been allocated our line management responsibilities.

I have 1-2-1s with staff re poor performance for immediate rectification of problems. I document my expectations of change. However, predominantly I have a need for staff who line manage other staff to be trained on how to manage poor performance as there is a layer between myself and the individual(s) that needs to be better prepared on how to handle poor performance and monitor progress and indeed in some cases actually take responsibility for this. An ongoing up skill requirement is obvious and practical example role playing activities need to be entered into with staff so that they can believe in themselves that they can monitor poor performance effectively - staff need to hone their own tools for managing poor performance and this only comes by practice.
On an individual level, I would arrange a one-to-one with the person concerned, establish whether there are any contributory factors that I need to know about. Ascertain the individual's assessment of his/her own performance, whether the person knows what is expected of them, make sure objectives are realistic and identify any training gaps. Once that is established, it's a case of being honest - what I'm not happy with and what I require to improve performance. On a team level, a similar process but without the personal element. If a personal issue manifested itself as something that was affecting team performance, then I would deal with that on an individual basis.

I meet with the individual and point out the areas that need to be improved.

Poor performance is harder to deal with than praise. Personally I deal with poor performance by continually speaking to the individual as there must be an underlining reason why this is the case.

Not an issue at present. If poor performance was an issue it would be dealt with through meetings were objectives and timescales were set and all actions recorded.

Observe, listen and identify problem area. Discuss problem/poor performance and suggest corrective measures. If unsolvable, identify support role and put in place. Finally, if still not effective, inform line manager, and involve HR. Log all activity, at all times.

As yet not had an instance of poor performance. First stage would be to meet with the individual to determine causes, then ideally to work together on improving performance.

Initially these are flagged up during 1-2-1s with the individual/s concerned. Often problems are the result of poor or misinterpreted communication from others. 1-2-1s also allow the opportunity for the 1-2-1 to be conducted as informally or semi-formally depending on the nature of the complaint. I often ask my staff for their solution to a perceived problem, and we negotiate a solution from that.

1. Discussed directly with the tutor This course in unique in that it is heavily contributed to by part time staff. Monitoring the performance of part time staff is important. There is an opportunity for the part time teacher to talk through any issues, at least once every two weeks.

Through informal meetings and feedback.

See 7.
Provide positive feedback where possible, review any problem areas and consider possible future actions, e.g. provide training, modify approach etc.

Feedback in team meetings and at one to one meetings.

Constructive confrontation, HR involvement if necessary.

Raise it at probation level if possible, if not during a supervision session, and draw up action plans if appropriate. Also offer training if there is an area of weakness and make it clear when I expect to see improvements.

Lack of the above.

At a team level, if we are not achieving a particular target, then a meeting is called to discuss the issue and devise a plan to correct the problem. If all else fails, I will put a plan in place and allocate activities to ensure progress. However, this is usually only successful in the short term, as a plan which is owned by the team is more likely to become part of their normal practice. At an individual level poor performance is discussed privately and any reasons hopefully identified. A plan to address the issue is agreed and performance monitored until it has improved. At this stage nothing is written down unless the individual concerned so wishes. As yet it has not been necessary to address issues more formally, but the next stage would be to review progress and, if the problem persisted, to make a note of the outcomes of the discussion and have both parties sign it. This would form the first stage of a more formal performance management process.

Usually interviews combined with the Dean and Head of Department.

Luckily this isn't a problem for me, but it would be handled in the same way as good performance. Either privately with an individual, or on a bigger scale to the whole team. I have been required to do this in the past, but not for a long time.

Monthly team meetings and monthly individual meetings are used to check progress against agreed actions and objectives.

Depending on circumstances a quiet word, identification of problem, assessment of options, identification of solution e.g. better explanation of the task, training, etc.
It’s very rare. If there are failures then it is due frequently to work overload or being asked to do things beyond their competence. This then requires either training or re-delegating the task to someone who can cope. Working to people’s strengths is the key. We are not all Leonardo da Vinci’s. I don’t actually have to overtly manage, since all the team are conscious of quality and performance standards and thus you don’t have to chide and monitor….its not my style to lead overtly from the front. We are a cooperative. Of course sometimes a lead is necessary and I give it.

1. Find out reason for poor performance 2. Rectify above.

Tackle issue by investigating why performance is poor, revisit performance targets to ensure that they are reasonable/achievable and act on findings.

Discussion with individual or team. Find out if there are underlying problems causing the poor performance. Look at training if needed.

Reviews, 1-2-1, additional meetings, support, training.

Failure to meet objectives/targets Feedback from users of service.

Generally through management team discussion, individual review and team meetings.

If there is evidence of poor performance I will arrange to discuss this with the team/individual so that the reasons can be identified and action taken to resolve problems that contribute to the poor performance.

Fortunately the team has consistently performed to a very high level and work ethics are excellent amongst all staff members. When minor problems have occurred, I have arranged one to one meetings with individual staff members concerned in order to discuss their performance and assess whether there are any issues that have contributed to the situation and whether anything can be done to help them improve their performance. I have relatively little experience of this within my unit, however.

Individual: information those staff directly responsible to me in one-to-one face-to-face meetings of incidents which are considered to be poor. Also in accordance with UL’s Capability Policy; one Stage 3 formal written warning already dealt with; currently considering initiation of Stage 1 informal formal on another matter (need to gather evidence). Organisational performance: reported to SMPT and/or direct to Head of School.
Privately - in the first instance. I would remind a member of staff if a deadline has not been met and ask why this is. I would first check that the person has understood the brief and is able to carry out the task – i.e. is there a valid barrier here? Does the person have the relevant skills etc - is there a staff development need? If I was then confident that the person was able to carry out the tasks and clearly understood the remit then I would put very clear goals and deadlines and monitor closely that these were achieved. If they were not then I would warn the person concerned that he/she was not carrying out their function satisfactorily and if the situation did not improve then I might need to bring this to the attention of my line manager. I feel as if I need to qualify questions 9 &10 below - I feel supported by my direct line manager but as explained above up to now I do not think we have been supported by UL systems in being able to incorporate a real performance management system.

Quickly and fairly draw attention to gaps between my expectation and staff performance/outputs on any day to day issues. Giving opportunity for staff to come up with better solutions/right answers or improve in any way necessary plus ensuring I have a full understanding of any conflicting issues/time constraints and other pressures that could impact on staff performance. Currently using preliminary capability processes for problematic staff - i.e. ensuring recording of objectives and task setting and the associated levels of performance by staff.

Not really relevant again for me. If I come across what I think is poor performance my style is to help the individual as far as I can. I can't say I have come across anyone who needs any further action on my part. My answers to the following two questions, 9 and 10, owe more to my previous existence pre-UL when I held several senior positions but not too relevant her. However I do see it as part of my job to flag poor performance and deal with it if possible.

I am not directly responsible for my colleagues’ performance at individual level but may have to deal with issues raised through course committee by student reps. I have had to counsel colleagues on issues/complaints on a one-to-one basis but ultimately they may need to be resolved by my head of school.

I give regular feedback in one to one/team meetings (as appropriate) and discuss any areas of concern. I look with the individual at how this performance affects the wider team, and look at how they can make changes to resolve this. I have drawn up informal and formal action plans, but at this stage the process falls down in my opinion. I have managed to resolve the majority of poor performance issues but as soon as the formal process is started - manager beware.

Verbal and written comments.
This is very rare but if it occurred with a member of the course team I would: 1. speak to the person concerned at an informal meeting to explain our expectations and requirements and find out the source of the problem. If this has no effect: 2. speak to the person concerned at a formal, recorded meeting. If this has no effect: 3. report the matter to SMPT/Professor McGonagall. If the problem is with staff who are not part of the team (i.e. support staff) I would report any significant problem to their line manager. I would try to deal with minor issues myself, or with problems that I might have played a part in - e.g. if I have not communicated clearly, or overloaded someone.

Open, honest feedback.

Q8. How confident are you in your skills for dealing with issues of individual or team performance?

![Levels of confidence for dealing with poor performance]

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Q9. Please describe how your choice in the previous question (Q9.) impacts on the way in which you tackle issues of individual or team poor performance.

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<td>27</td>
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<tr>
<td>I rarely tackle issues of poor performance</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I dislike tackling issues of poor performance</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I leave issues of poor performance for someone else to deal with</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel supported by my line manager/human resources in dealing with issues of underperformance</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not feel supported by my line manager/human resources in dealing with issues of underperformance</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Responses: 44 100
Q10. To what extent do you carry out the actions below? How important do you think, are each of the statements in relation to managing performance?

A: I always do this; B: I often do this; C: I sometimes do this; D: I never do this

1: Very important; 2: Important; 3: Not important; 4: Don’t know

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>A (%)</th>
<th>B (%)</th>
<th>C (%)</th>
<th>D (%)</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I promote UL’s vision, mission, ethos and values through the work I do</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>64</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have clear objectives and targets to work to each year, which are agreed by myself and my line manager.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>57</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I review the business processes I use in order to improve their efficiency and effectiveness.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>61</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I set the individuals/teams that I am responsible for “SMART” objectives to work to.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I monitor individual/team performance against these SMART objectives.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>48</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I praise good performance at individual/team level.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>89</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I take remedial action when I identify poor performance at individual/team level.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>68</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I collect and analyse relevant data in order that I can monitor and report on performance.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I seek the views/expectations of all stakeholders in order to inform the work of the school/unit.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>34</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I compare (benchmark) the performance of the school/unit I work in with similar organisations.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q11. From the list of performance management interventions below, please select what you consider to be the most effective ‘Top Ten’ interventions for improving performance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTERVENTION</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Written/Verbal Recognition (Praise)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Appraisal</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One to One Meetings</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Meetings/Briefings</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Development/Succession Planning</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching/On the Job Training</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Employment Practices e.g. - Equal Opportunities, Health and Safety, Discipline, Sickness Absence, Grievance, Flexible Working etc.</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMART Objectives/Targets</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment and Selection</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Induction</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Review</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Training Courses</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Employment Benefits e.g. - Pension, Annual Leave, Pay, Staff Discount</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Evaluation</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultative Processes</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flatter Organisational Structures</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Indicators</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probation</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualification Based Study</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competencies/Skills Frameworks</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Audits/Benchmarking</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hierarchical Organisational Structures</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Framework Models e.g. - European Foundation Quality Management, Total Quality Management, Investors in People, Quality Assurance Agency, International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO), Balanced Scorecard etc.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Responses: 44 100%
Q12. UL is continually looking for ways in which it can improve the academic and support services it provides. You are invited to use the space below to put forward any suggestions/comments that you may have which you think might improve the performance of your school/unit or UL as a university. Please make time to contribute as your views are important.

**Response Count: 37**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job shadowing days so that staff get an understanding of different roles within the organisation to understand their importance. Rewarding good performance.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Take into account that other people are timetabled for lectures. Courses need to be shorter and flexible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In previous jobs, I have found mentoring schemes to be really beneficial (mentors from a different unit should be appointed).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In cases of poor performance we need robust systems where the manager is left in no doubt as to proceeding with the support of the organisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support needed from the centre hierarchy for all of the services that UL provides. Often feel like we are not needed or wanted in the organisation - it is then difficult to motivate staff when they are not appreciated by the top.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Given the specific difficulty of line management for me (i.e. in relation to staff participation in enterprise activities) I would be interested to learn how other schools are tackling this issue for I think there are no obvious solutions to this as staff in the School contribute to many different programmes and projects and so have differing priorities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The current planning mechanisms are based around each school and unit submitting individual plans. It would be good to have cross unit/school discussions when composing the plans and where appropriate to have joint actions/objectives. The mechanisms for gathering student feedback need to be refined in order that services can be more user focused.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The key issue is to take some responsible strategic decisions about merging universities to ensure appropriate funding of course development and marketing plus new building provision particularly at Corinthian Gardens. (but it's too late - we've missed the boat). Without this we are simply chasing our own tails and simply managing our decline. We are simply deluding ourselves if we do not recognise this truth. There will be little chance for improvement although at programme level we are attempting improvement against impossible odds all the time. Delegating budgets in times of decent resources would have been intelligent. Instead delegation comes at the point where everything is pared to the bone. The buck is passed down the line, and now instead of concentrating on teaching, we spend most energy thinking of how not to spend money. If you want a classic we are being asked to undertake maximum recruitment efforts at the point where programmes are to be charged for all postage and the allocation of postage has been slashed dramatically. QED.

Get rid of excessive bureaucracy, reduce admin burden, improve sense of shared culture, values, purpose, quality of higher management and communication.

I strongly believe that we (UL) need to create an environment (culture) in which staff and students feel pride in working/studying at UL. To achieve this I believe we need to - have a clear goal (vision) (that is stated in simple terms e.g. to be the best place to work and study in Wales) - ensure that all objectives are directed towards that goal - recognise (and reward) good performance and provide mechanisms for investigating the reasons for under performance.

It is a source of frustration that this unit is treated as a small business, when it comes to some things, but not others. This means that when it comes to sick/maternity pay, I am not treated as a small business, therefore cannot claim back the payments plus the 4% compensation, which has a huge impact on my budget. By the very nature of this profession, there will always be mainly young staff, which means that maternity leave is a constant source of worry.

Space and facilities for all staff to meet, discuss, etc.

Ratio of academic staff to support staff within the school is not right (weighted too heavily towards support staff). Too many academic staff not nearly pulling their weight. Support staff are treated as second class citizens - lowest paid despite being on occasion more qualified than some of the lecturing staff, poor conditions of work e.g. lack of staff rooms. No member of technical staff allowed on school MPT etc etc.
UL is still trying to come together as a whole organisation. In parts there is some complacency as compared with other organisations. It is somewhat insular as an institution and can therefore lack powers of insight - there needs to be more 'getting out there'. Policies are in place for many things but sometimes they seem not to affect the day to day work of individuals. For HR strategy I would suggest less focus on the letter of the policy and more focus on whether the spirit of it is understood and being carried out on the ground.

My performance (and efficiency) as a Programme Director is undermined by lack of administrative support generally and some poor central admin systems such as Academic Registry.

Better understanding of the role of academic and administrative staff. I find it amazing that there is hardly any interaction between either group in UL. As an academic I feel that my role in improving teaching, publishing my work, increasing research and consultancy (i.e. improving UL's performance) is not well supported administratively. However, I appreciate that administrative role is not well appreciated by academic staff. Therefore, greater understanding of EACH role would help performance.

I do not believe that audited systems can take the place of relationships of trust and ownership. I also believe that the imposition of such systems undermines trust and ownership, particularly if used to measure and report. Nor can commitment, generosity, effort or integrity be measured. These are the attitudes which create a great working environment. As a CD I am not prepared to undertake a general auditing role in relation to my colleagues. I am prepared to follow up issues of poor performance however, since they affect the entire team. To this end, a staged system would be helpful so that it was clear when and how responsibility for a specific problem should be passed on to School managers. My experience of the current system has been that it is very long-drawn-out, (up to 3 years in one case) cumbersome and messy for all concerned. NB this questionnaire is not particularly appropriate for CDs and does not adequately express my views.

Our unit, in common I think with all, could improve the performance of UL were we afforded more by way of clear direction and leadership. The institution doesn't appear to be in command of its own destiny and this leaves scope for malcontentment to spread, personal agendas to take hold and the organisation to atrophy.

The communications action plan developed by Professor Flitwick is a good example of good performance management. I have skimmed it; and do not have an electronic copy; but it might be worth asking her for a copy. Recommended. Also, need to improve training of academic "managers"; but this statement is based on the stereotype of such individuals not willing to see performance management as a part of their role.
One way in which the UL experience could be improved would be for the hierarchy to make a greater effort to integrate academic and support staff across the university. There still exists a great divide and a 'them and us' culture which hinders the student and staff experience and impacts on every aspect of performance management.

I think a proper review of 'who is managing what' and what skills do they possess to be a 'manager' could be beneficial. It appears to me that there is a distinct lack of professional management within UL with lots of the senior managers (understandably) coming up through the academic field and surprisingly to me, considering I see academia as a 'people' business, most with a lack of how to manage people.

I believe that UL has a large number of high quality qualified members of staff who have huge untapped potential. I would like a strong leadership and management for the top of good and bad performance. I would like regular rewards to be available for managers to direct to good performers, to recognise the efforts made, and I would like HR to be able to support a robust system for tackling poor performance. I hope that the HERA process can recognise role development, but also that the process can adapt to individuals who do not fulfil the role and make adjustments down if required. I would like HR to be able to support the redeployment of individuals both for individual personal development, and where an individual has stopped developing and is demotivated in their current role.

To speed up the Staff replacement process. Typically a vacancy is 3 months from resignation to replacement and this impacts on the remaining team with unreasonable work loads. Also to introduce a formal recognition award, whereby staff are 'rewarded' with a letter of thanks from the VC. The existing VC Awards are good, but are limited to a few; a letter wouldn't cost much, but would go a long way in terms of morale. Heads of Schools and Dept Heads could nominate staff maybe? To create a culture that supports the UL values as being inclusive. Currently support and academic staff appear divided (as indeed this questionnaire shows by asking whether academic or support) - this could be by providing staff rooms, or even an annual Christmas Party (CIA maybe?) for all staff?

I feel that there is not enough communication between the administrative centres and academic centres. Occasionally decisions made centrally seem to make life difficult for academic staff. For example, HR decided that no one should sit on an interview panel without training, this may appear a laudable objective but what it meant was that on some interview panels programme directors were unable to sit on the panel recruiting a member of staff for their team. Particularly irritating if they had considerable experience of sitting on panels but hadn't had an opportunity to do the training.
1. More inclusivity of part time staff in terms of training opportunities, research groups etc. 2. At management level: A mechanism other than the APR that will give a more understanding and knowledge of a programmes' teaching content, ethos, best practice. 3. To have a more comprehensive understanding of programme (see 2) in order that decision at management and senior management concerning the future of a programme is firmly based on accurate and comprehensive knowledge. Not all information concerning a programme is directly drawn from the course team and is sometimes anecdotal and inaccurate.

Management induction procedure not in place at time of employment - first time Programme Director. On-going, active management training. Better circulation of support services personnel - better understanding of whom one should contact, and what people do.

UL needs clear structures to reward staff who are performing well and mechanisms to discipline poorly performing staff. There is no incentive to do extra work in things like research & enterprise as you get no recognition for it.

More resourcing for support services.

Supporting UL's vision and mission would be easier for all concerned if they felt they were part of the process. Whilst it is possible to do this at a local level, there is no consultation on UL's general direction and very little dissemination other than a cascading down of individual issues through the hierarchy. Staff do not feel that they can make an impact beyond their individual role, as the corporate level plans and strategies are becoming more remote and decisions which affect their lives are taken without consultation even with the unions. Within this top-down paternalistic culture, performance management through consensus becomes very difficult. Funding is also a very major problem, with very little money indeed available for staff development within the team's budget.

Greater flexibility for part-timers in workforce. Academic apathy needs to be tackled in order to obtain greater media coverage and to ensure potential students coming through clearing have a tutor to talk to/ditto at open days (even if they are on Saturdays!). Greater input from our Business Support Managers to enable us to connect with academics - this is not working so far.

Inter unit/school job shadowing would be a useful annual exercise to allow staff to see how the other half live.

Better communication systems, improved promotion/reward opportunities, more collegiate atmosphere (between schools and support units).
I personally think that managers at the same levels in UL should meet periodically to share ideas and experiences on matter such as appraisals/personnel issues etc. Most of the time decisions that affect you as a manager are made at higher level. Unless, you are fed this information or you actively seek it you only find out by mistake. I agree that it is hard to keep everyone informed and luckily there are administration e-mails and the staff website which helps.

Being responsive to the professional judgements/views of academic staff. To ensure staff are motivated and feel supported. To develop more inclusive practices and to move away from hierarchical structure so that all staff feel involved and aware of what is happening in the institution/school. To give staff more ownership of processes (linked to respecting professional judgements) e.g. through UL committees. NB I have been in post as a manager since 1st August. I have been a member of staff at UL for 13 years.

Cohesive and consistent cross border aims that cross over HR/Finance/Marketing/School/Estates needs - a holistic strategic plan as a UL unit that is based on 3 core aims for one financial year e.g. implementation of Trent, achievement of RDAPs/RAE, implementation of business continuity. All units/schools etc work to achieving these aims and when they are met another set are produced for the following year - plain and simple language not reams and reams of paper. Clear, short and directional vision, bullet points not paragraphs. There is a) too much paper traffic b) too much email traffic and this "guff" gets in the way of doing the real job, a process of attrition must be undertaken to stem the tide of unnecessary paperwork/email to refocus the attention onto the core business activity of academia. There are too many territories and not enough cross border association/implementation and too many comments that it's "X's problem" when all issues are everyone's problem we have a lack of identity with UL as a whole and more of an individual identity within a unit/school = this is not good business practise.

Make some decisions and carry out the actions instead of waffling on for years while others around us are stealing our market.
### BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

#### Staff Numbers By Length of Service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of Service</th>
<th>Academic Staff</th>
<th>Support Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 year</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 5 years</td>
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<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 10 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
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<td>11 to 15 years</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>16 to 20 years</td>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 20 years</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Responses:</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td><strong>29</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Age Range

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Support Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20 and under</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 to 30</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>31 to 40</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>41 to 50</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>51 to 60</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61 and over</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Responses:</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td><strong>29</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Academic Staff</th>
<th>Support Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Responses:</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td><strong>29</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION FOUR

‘ANECQUOTES’

A Snapshot of Managers’ Points of View, Thoughts, Observations, Deliberations and Health Warnings

April 2009
SECTION FOUR: ‘ANECQUOTES’ FROM EMG AND SMG DEVELOPMENT EVENTS

The following ‘ANECQUOTES’ are outcomes of the various senior management development events (2004, 2005 and 2006). They aim to encapsulate snapshots of managers’ points of view, thoughts, observations, deliberations and health warnings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If schools don't have a handle on academic development then we're in trouble and I have a problem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too much independence or authority is given to individuals to develop - or not to develop - programmes and there is not sufficient happening.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UL has recruited some very good staff – good teachers, good researchers and good support teams. We have to make sure we value our good staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We need to work on getting a better quality of outcome for our students so that they are securing ‘graduate employability’ status when they leave UL.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is difficult to improve our brand without the right portfolio in place - we need to have ‘EMPLOYER APPROVED’ stamped on the front of the portfolio of all schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We need to improve our reputation with Head Teachers so that they think of UL first when making recommendations to school leavers. Current branding of cartoon students does not do the trick.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UL shouldn’t be advertising or using clearing to rate its performance – it gives the wrong message. We want UL to be a student’s first choice!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We have strengths in traditional delivery but there is a huge training need in developing flexible learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just because you’re new, doesn’t mean you’re right!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All the good is a bit patchy, not broad enough, not deep enough.

Underdeveloped networks (both business and political) and not a high enough profile – we’re OK in the city, but beyond?? We’re not strutting our stuff.

We are better at starting than finishing – if someone says they are going to do something, then they need to mean it, not just say ‘Yes’ so that they can get out of the door!

We have 28 members on the Management Board and 5 Deans of School – is that the right balance between schools and support?

There are more rules in HE than anywhere else I have worked in 37 years – we need to identify principles rather than rules. Can we go back and re-visit all our rules to ascertain their current value?

The Trade Union (Academic) is not on the side of progress – palpable blockers, good people but not in this century.

‘I do teaching - but only third years’
‘I don’t do teaching – I’m all research’
‘I don’t teach undergraduates you understand’

Research, Enterprise and Third Mission is still not very visible in UL, either physically (there are very few places we can take visiting bodies) or in terms of engagement/performance (KTPs 3% tops and palpable engagement in research 10%) we need more engagement and also from people around this table (Management Board)
Don’t spread Enterprise or Third Mission activity too thinly - focus on key things that bring the best to UL and get more people to do those things – **everyone has a role to play**. Without support, it’s an uphill struggle for schools delivering at the sharp end.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Academic Handbook has 600 pages of rules!</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-fighting, one-up-man-ship and selfish plotting – we are all on the <strong>SAME SIDE</strong>!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a sense we are police people so we must be cautious</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student registry should be so efficient that they (students) don’t know registry is there! Then they can concentrate on their learning, get better grades and therefore obtain graduate employability. <strong>At the moment under 2% of our students return to graduate study with us.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education is about change for the better – changing people, changing the environment and changing the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some men see things as they are and say ‘why’? I dream of things that never were and say ‘why not’? (Robert Kennedy)</td>
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<tr>
<td>I’ve worked on both sides – as a Dean of School and as a Dean of a Support Unit, so I’ve seen both sides and I’ve still had someone say to me, support units are never harassed and don’t work as hard as we do. Instead of pulling against each other, we need to channel our energies in putting the student first and nurture them so that they can become good all round citizens. Customer care – there’s not enough of it - ‘silly student go away’.</td>
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</table>
Today’s students are no longer the people our educational system was designed to teach (Prensky 2001)

The design of the Soltaire Centre is based around the theory of social learning. There is one point of access. ‘It doesn’t matter to a student how we are structured – they just want to access a service’ – Issue: (Replacement of lost student ID badge = UL one week v. Soltaire Centre 5 minutes).

Every group talked about the identity of UL…I thought there was enough work already done on that bit, but there doesn’t seem to be a consistent view around the table (Facilitator)

It’s what UL does, people see themselves as separate from the organisation.

We need to identify the big issues and mark out UL for the next 10 years not just locally, but internationally.

We’ve also been searching for distinctiveness.

We have known for several years, even before the student satisfaction survey that students dislike the timing and quality of the feedback they get. Q. What is the failure in the leadership system that you haven’t addressed the issue?

One way of defining identity is by describing what you do e.g. learning and teaching, research, third mission, but getting a common understanding about what all these things mean amongst 450 staff........?

Dis-investing to re-invest. Why do we still do HNCs?

‘We are a muddle in the middle’
| **Complete absence of mature learner and return to learning learner – external perceptions – do people see us as a place to return to learn?** |
| We need a tangible FE - HE network extension. Then we would get some good connections with business. |
| We need to improve the ICT in Art and Design – our current provision is well below standard. |
| We have to end the subsidy of weak courses by strong courses. |
| We need to define exactly what we mean by the ‘Total Student Experience.’ That then needs to be written into corporate documents and we then need to link our marketing with our strategy so that you are in no doubt about what the corporate driver is and what your role is within that. |
| There is inconsistency across schools – not all students are given any assessment criteria. One member of staff was purported to say, ‘What you expect us to tell the students what we want them to do?!’ |
| 27 out of UL’s 29 extra-curricula activities are in Sport – the other two are the Oman Society and the Brunei Society. What do you do if you are a student and you’re not into Sport? We need a taskforce to look into that. |
| If we had a reunion, would they (the students) come back? |
| As part of the LEAP programme, secondary schools have suggested we should be targeting year 9’s and guaranteeing them an interview. Head Teachers know UL for its Education, Sport and a little bit of Art and Design – they didn’t know we had a management school or school of health and social sciences. |
| Why should students come to UL for Sport instead of Bath or Loughborough? It might be about the status of the University itself. |
| You can’t detach corporate and school culture and branding – sports facilities and reputation are very important. When we are playing league rugby and |
football, people see it on the television – it’s renowned and publicised. When Leicester City Football club made top of the league, the University of Leicester had double the number of applications.

The condition of the estates and facilities is critical to the student experience - UL’s need to be of a higher standard (condition survey). We need an immediate review of the estates strategy. UL shouldn’t be in a position where it has to react to the competition. The environment changes all the time and we need to be proactive.

UL needs to ‘refresh’ its staff - How do you create space in your staffing e.g. higher turnover, so that we can recruit in the staff we want?

We need to have increased staff pride in UL and what we are about. We have to turn the ‘UL effect’ into a positive and get UL into the top quartile of the National Student Satisfaction survey ratings. We need more students to make UL their 1st, 2nd and 3rd choice rather than coming to us through clearing.

We need to improve retention rates – students have to feel comfortable with us. We also need to improve the progression rates from degree to masters to research.

Some staff have been running down our IT facilities and sending students to Hogwarts University.

We should impact assess the student experience against any decisions that are made.

Students shouldn’t be passed from pillar to post – we should have a student portal which is IT based (one stop shop) where their FAQ’s are answered, where they can access their marks etc.
We should have in place a buddy or mentoring system for students to make them feel welcome – especially for the first years.

There needs to be more of an engagement between UL and Students’ Union. We need to create a truly dynamic SU that represents the whole of the university – all of its students.

We should put our best teaching staff on the first year of programmes and then get our less good teachers to observe through peer observation.

Some staff are blockages and some staff are the freeways. We’ve just rewarded staff by making a significant investment in them through increased salaries and annual leave arrangements through the implementation of the national framework agreement. What change are we actually seeing on the shop floor?

We have an aging staff group who are likely to retire in the next five years. However, managers aren’t tackling issues of underperformance. Why would you leave if you were not operating at your full potential and we pay you more?! This puts pressure on other staff. The best of our academics are really pressurised and they will leave us at the wrong time if we don’t address these issues.

Improve performance management – management with guts! If we do nothing, the wrong people will go. If we do something, we can target the right (wrong) people. We have good pockets of good programmes and we know where they are. £1million per annum – 10 people a year over the next 5 years will do something.

‘Surround yourself with good people’ & ‘Never duck the difficult decisions’.

If we want to do this we need to have in place very clear performance measures. Performance management, peer review and student satisfaction are critical.

It about facing up to the facts – we need a 100% return on the CV’s – we pay their salaries, we can expect them to tell us what they are doing!
This is the first university I’ve been at where there are a very large number of staff who are not research active, they are only teaching. They need to be active in three areas: research, teaching and administration.

The VC informed EMG/SMG that UL had been stationary for too long and needed to make some tough decisions. He reported that other institutions had managed to deal successfully with staffing issues (without great cost) and emphasised that UL must do the same. He stressed that having a performance appraisal system in place was critical and emphasised that the buck stopped at Management Board in terms of ensuring that the scheme was operationalised. He went on to say that unless tough decisions were made, UL would simply be wallowing around with a great danger of being swallowed up by the competition.

The facilitator raised as a concern, his observation that even when a decision had been made by the EMG/SMG it seemed to become the site for further discussion.

The group considered it imperative to implement and use the new appraisal scheme so that 1-2-1 conversations could take place. Deans reported that their management structures were now in place and were keen that the ‘brave new world’ momentum wasn’t lost. It was proposed that the new professional standards be incorporated into the scheme and the group advocated that all staff should be evaluated as part of the appraisal process in relation to their contribution to the ‘Total Student Experience’. It was also felt that how staff were spending their time should be made transparent through the appraisal scheme.

At present there is no way of establishing/qualifying how effective support units are. The group proposed that support unit’s be reviewed on a quinquennial basis by external ‘partners’ in a similar fashion to academic schools. This would provide a fairer, open and more objective way of reviewing support units as opposed to internal mechanisms which can sometimes be regarded as ‘witch hunts’. If implemented, quinquennial review would also assist in demonstrating that UL has in place sound review and self assessment mechanisms when scrutinised as part of the QAA institutional review.
The group proposed that there was a need to introduce more staff development throughout UL in relation to ‘Enhancing the Student Experience’. It was recognised that a one size fit’s all ‘Customer Care’ programme would not be appropriate, but that a more tailored approach would probably have a more effective impact, for example:

- Learning and Teaching, - Enhancing the Student Experience
- Assessment and marking - Enhancing the Student Experience
- ICT - Enhancing the Student Experience
- Student support - Enhancing the Student Experience.

The group emphasised the importance of managers making proper and consistent use of the UL HR systems and processes that were already in place, for example Probation, Appraisal, Staff Development, Capability Procedure, Sickness Absence, Disciplinary Procedure etc. In addition, the group proposed that a fixed sum of money, for example £1 million per annum be set aside to assist in ‘Staff Churn’, targeted at specific schools. It was recognised that staff needed to be fit for purpose and that those that weren’t, had a tendency to drag everyone else down with them. It was felt that this sum of money would contribute to the churn of approximately 10 staff per annum and that although expensive, would possibly produce rapid economic paybacks as a result of the message that would be given.

If you are leading a small team, you need to have a particular set of skills. Having this particular skill set however, doesn’t necessarily mean that you have the skill set required to lead a ‘whole organisation’.

Leadership appears to be very ‘context’ bound. There is a need to understand what and who you are leading for example: SUBJECT/SECTOR/SCHOOL/SECTION/PEOPLE.

In terms of leadership styles, it has to be recognised that sometimes you can not be tolerant and may need to take a hard line, for example, if something is likely to damage the organisation perhaps financially (risk assessment).

Everyone carries with them their own understanding of Leadership/Management, so it is important to arrive at some consensus about what it means in UL.
How much of Leadership/Management is ‘trainable/developable’? We may need a variety of methods to tackle this.

Leadership is exercised at different levels and this needs to be recognised in any Leadership/Management programme.

In team UL we all wear the same colours – we are just all rowing in different directions!

Managers spent 20% of their time fire-fighting, 30% in meetings and 20% of their time dealing with e-mails.

Some participants felt that they were perhaps not managing themselves or their time as effectively as they might do. There was a general feeling that much of each day was spent dashing here and there and subsequently not spending the time that should be spent with the employees/teams etc. Conversely there were issues around the ‘British Working Disease’ in terms of the currently held perception that if you were seen talking too and spending time with people, there was a common belief and view that you couldn’t be very busy or have enough to do if you had time to do this.

Discussion revolved around priorities and delegation – what exactly is a priority? Work was also taken home on a regular basis which then had a knock on effect in relation to individuals’ lifestyles (work-life balance).

It was recognised that higher education institutions were at present more in the public gaze than the private sector and that there was a need to start looking at what makes an exemplar university in terms of being able to take UL forward. It was suggested that one way of doing this was to start mapping the concepts of Leadership/Management in respect of ‘What does this mean for me as an individual’?

Improved communication systems could enhance understanding of School/Support Units and their respective areas of concern (sometimes in UL a problem shared is a problem doubled!).

It was felt that UL currently had a somewhat ill-defined support structure in terms of tasks being duplicated, or at the extreme, things that are missed.
completely. We need to create a much clearer remit for each functional unit in UL that everyone can share.

Consideration should be given to up-skilling administrative and support staff to enable them to multi-task across a range of functions. This would allow things like peaks and troughs in workloads, sickness absence, holiday cover etc. to be managed more effectively and would enable the Schools/Unit’s deliver the core business of the university.

Reinforce/clarify the raison d’être of each forum/committee so that there is less duplication/time wastage, e.g., manage the SMT forum more effectively – a more open forum for raising issues – Any Management Issues should be supported with a paper – Leadership issues need not be supported by papers – they should be brainstorming sessions.

More training needed for managers in HR systems such as grievance procedures, system training.

In the first instance, discussion revolved around: What is the role of an Academic Manager – who does what? We need to have clearly defined roles. Need to learn how to work smarter, perhaps by exploiting MIS and IT systems more fully.
The first and most important thing to stress is that innovation at UL must encompass not only the big things but also the small things. Innovations may be reactive and result in systems enhancement through streamlining of existing systems and may result in financial savings OR it may be proactive and generate new ideas and allow us to think outside the box. This starts with a management structure which at all levels:

- has an expectation of innovation;
- develops an enabling and inclusive culture;
- is risk aware not risk averse;
- tries to work smarter not harder.

Who decides about matters?

The answer... is that it is us – if we are up to it...and I am greatly pleased, to see that we are.