

Tutukihaka Pūmātauraka me te Arotake Whanakahaka

Guidelines for 2026 Annual and Biennial Academic Performance and Development Review (APDR)

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1. Academic Performance and Development Review

- (a) Academic Performance and Development Review (APDR) is the formal, structured procedure that the University of Otago uses to run and record meetings and discussions between Staff members and Reviewers.
- (b) As the formal part of the ongoing effective relationship between Staff member and Reviewer, APDR relies on critical, constructive conversations throughout the year.
- (c) APDR discussions encompass four aspects:
 - i. reviewing and assessing performance in the previous period
 - ii. discussing career aspirations, capability and expectations
 - iii. setting objectives
 - iv. identifying support provided and a development plan for how objectives will be achieved.
- (d) At each formal APDR, it is expected that the Staff member will have the opportunity to meet with a Reviewer to discuss these aspects.
- (e) APDR formalises these discussions in the APDR System, through
 - i. the Staff member providing information about their work
 - ii. the Reviewer providing feedback on the work
 - iii. the Reviewer and Staff member agreeing on and recording objectives.

2. Schedule of Academic Performance and Development Reviews

- (a) The Human Resources Division publishes and maintains a Schedule of Academic Performance and Development Reviews to set out the eligible academic titles, number of Reviewers, and frequency of APDRs.

3. Eligibility for Academic Performance and Development Review

- (a) Eligible academic titles are set out in the Schedule of Academic Performance and Development Reviews.
- (b) A Staff member who is employed in a position under the eligible academic title at the review opening date is eligible for Academic Performance and Development Review in that position.
- (c) All eligible Staff are required to complete an APDR annually or biennially. Arrangements for specific situations are outlined below.
 - i. Fixed-term employment
 - Staff who are employed on a fixed-term agreement are eligible for APDR.

- Where funding for employment is external or fixed-term, staff are equally eligible for career development, planning and support.
 - Where the fixed term employment ends in the current year or early the following year and the staff member is unlikely to be appointed to another academic role in the University, the Head and Staff member may agree not to conduct an APDR.
- ii. Part-time employment
- Staff employed part-time are eligible for APDR.
 - For staff who are employed for less than 0.1FTE, the Academic Head and Staff member may agree to a less comprehensive APDR.
- iii. Seasonal employment
- Staff whose employment is Semester-Time Only or Academic-Year Only are eligible for the APDR and should be provided with the opportunity to complete the review process before the end of their academic year.
- iv. Parental leave
- Staff who are on parental leave are eligible for a review. Preferably, the APDR should happen before the leave, but it may be necessary to hold the review once the Staff member returns to work.
- v. Research and Study Leave
- Staff who are on Research and Study Leave are eligible for APDR.
- vi. Applied for Academic Promotion
- Staff who have applied for promotion during the current year are eligible for APDR.
 - Where staff who have applied for promotion have discussed academic performance and development with their Reviewer as part of that process, the scheduled APDR may be less comprehensive if the staff member and Reviewer agree.
- vii. Retirement or resignation
- Staff who are retiring or resigning are eligible for APDR if employment is continuing into the following academic year.
 - Where a Staff member is retiring or resigning very early the next year, the Head and staff member may agree not to conduct an APDR.
- viii. Top of salary scale
- Staff who are at the top of a salary scale are eligible for APDR.

ix. Staff who have more than one position eligible for review

- Where the staff member has more than one academic position eligible for APDR, they should normally have a separate APDR for each different position type. For example, a staff member with two jobs as Assistant Research Fellow and Teaching Fellow should have a separate APDR for each role.
- Where Reviewers would be the same for two or more positions of the same kind, the APDRs may be combined if the Staff member and Reviewers agree. For example, where a Senior Research Fellow has employment split into two separate fractional jobs for different research projects.
- Reviews may be combined where appropriate, via consultation between Reviewers of different roles. For example, Associate Dean roles can often be included with the substantive APDR, since the line manager in the Associate Dean position is likely to be an additional reviewer in the substantive APDR.

(d) Where an APDR is not required, according to these eligibility guidelines and with the appropriate approvals, the Academic Head or Reviewer will notify Human Resources.

4. Timeframes for Academic Performance and Development Review

(a) The formal APDR processes run annually or biennially according to the Schedule of Academic Performance and Development Reviews.

(b) The APDR will normally open in August and close in December with dates published in the Schedule of Academic Performance and Development Reviews.

(c) All reviews and Reviewer comments must be completed in the APDR system by the closing dates published in the Schedule of Academic Performance and Development Reviews.

(d) Within the APDR opening and closing dates, Human Resources Division provides indicative timelines for Staff and Reviewers. Suggested timelines are published in the Schedule of Academic Performance and Development Reviews.

(e) The Review Period is the most recent of the following:

- i. since the date of appointment, for Staff appointed to a new position
- ii. since the last annual or biennial academic performance and development review.

(f) Staff who are recently promoted or appointed should have a Review Period appropriate to their situation. Objectives still must be recorded.

5. Role of the Staff member

- (a) The Staff member submits documentation through the APDR System.
- (b) The Staff member is required to submit the following material for an Academic Performance and Development Review:
 - i. A review statement describing achievements in the Review Period, according to the template set out in the APDR System. The review statement addresses objectives set in the previous APDR.
 - ii. Curriculum Vitae in University of Otago format that provides evidence for the achievements listed in the review statement.
 - iii. If the Staff member is in a role that requires teaching, they must submit evidence for their learning and teaching activities, such as a Schedule of Teaching Responsibilities and student and peer feedback; or a full Otago Teaching Profile.
 - iv. A plan or objectives for work to be done in the coming review period, for discussion and agreement with the Reviewer.
 - v. Other specific evidence required by the Academic Head or Reviewer.
- (c) The documentation submitted will relate to work done in the Review Period.
- (d) Where the Staff member has applied for promotion in the current year, promotion application documentation can be used as APDR documentation. The aim is to address the requirements of the APDR without creating unnecessary additional work where Staff members and Reviewers have already spent considerable time discussing career development during preparation of a promotion application. Objectives will still be required.

6. Reviewers

- (a) The Reviewer is normally the Academic Head.
- (b) The Academic Head may delegate an individual APDR to an appropriate colleague who works more closely to the staff member and has the appropriate knowledge and training to carry out an APDR. This colleague becomes the Reviewer and takes on responsibility for the review meeting, performance assessment, objective-setting and feedback.
- (c) Academic Heads retain responsibility for ensuring that all delegated reviews are properly carried out and documented.
- (d) Additional reviewers will be as set out in the review schedule.
- (e) Aside from delegation of a Reviewer under (b), changes to reviewers are possible only with approval of the Divisional Head. For example, reviewers may be changed

according to arrangements already in place to manage a conflict of interest, or in liaison with Human Resources.

7. Role of the Reviewer in reviewing performance and providing feedback

- (a) The Reviewer is responsible for arranging individual meetings with Staff members who are eligible for APDR.
- (b) The Reviewer assesses a Staff member's performance with reference to the objectives set at the beginning of the review period.
- (c) When assessing performance, the Reviewer will take into account achievement relative to opportunity and any new factors affecting capacity, similarly to the considerations for objective-setting in [Section 8 below](#).
- (d) The Reviewer must provide feedback to the Staff member on whether their performance has been satisfactory. The feedback recorded in the APDR System will be a summary of the APDR discussions that is helpful to the Staff member and to any future reviewers.
- (e) Feedback on performance will inform developmental objectives set for the coming Review Period.
- (f) Where an aspect of performance is not on track, the Reviewer will set a development plan with appropriate and specific objectives to assist the staff member to improve performance during the coming review period.
- (g) Where performance is assessed as not satisfactory, the Academic Head will put an appropriate performance management process in place. They would normally seek assistance from the Divisional Human Resources Advisory team.

8. Role of the Reviewer in setting objectives

- (a) The Reviewer sets objectives for the staff member at the start of a review period.
- (b) Objectives are informed by
 - i. expectations and benchmarks within each academic discipline or area
 - ii. the strategic needs of the academic unit and University
 - iii. the career aspirations of the staff member.
- (c) Expectations are flexible and must be interpreted with consideration of factors that may affect a staff member's capacity. Examples include, but are not limited to, the following three categories:
 - i. staff whose time is restricted, such as part-time employment, significant periods of absence (e.g. parental leave) or temporary reduction in FTE

- ii. staff whose capacity in certain areas of their core work is reduced by other University appointments requiring significant FTE, for example an associate dean or programme director role
 - iii. staff whose research or teaching responsibilities involve engagement with, or obligations to, specific communities (including mana whenua, Māori entities and Pacific communities), which affects the timeframes for completing work.
- (d) The expectations and objectives may be adjusted during the review period. Reasons to adjust include a change in circumstances, developmental needs, or to meet performance expectations. Any adjustments will require appropriate discussion between the staff member and their reviewer.
- (e) Discussions about objective-setting and career development should include consideration of future plans for academic promotion.
- (f) The Reviewer and Staff member formalise the agreed objectives by recording them in the Academic Reviews System (Progress). The record of the objectives set will describe how they will be met and any support to be put in place.

9. Role of the Academic Head

- (a) The Academic Head has overall responsibility for Academic Performance and Development Review, by:
- i. carrying out reviews as Reviewer and delegating reviews to other Reviewers as appropriate
 - ii. ensuring that all APDRs are completed within the published timeframes and documented appropriately, including feedback
 - iii. ensuring that there is a shared understanding of clear expectations
 - iv. supporting career development by aligning objectives with the needs/capacity of the area and strategic directions
 - v. fostering an environment where staff are supported to achieve their potential
 - vi. ensuring equitable access to career development planning and opportunities.

10. Academic Performance and Development Review procedure

- (a) Human Resources Division notifies Academic Heads and eligible staff members that the review is open and publishes an indicative timeline.
- (b) Academic Head sets department/school due dates.
- (c) Academic Head delegates individual reviews where appropriate and informs the Reviewers and staff members.

- (d) Academic Head informs Human Resources of any updates needed in the Academic Reviews System (for example, combining reviews under [Section 3\(c\)ix](#)).
- (e) Reviewer arranges to meet with each staff member.
- (f) Staff member submits review statement and documents via the Academic Reviews System (see [Section O](#)).
- (g) Reviewer and staff member hold APDR meetings.
- (h) Reviewer completes comments in APDR System.
 - i. Assessment of performance – Reviewer assesses performance according to the guidance in [Section 7](#).
 - ii. Setting objectives – Reviewer sets objectives for staff member according to [Section 8](#).
- (i) Salary progression and salary review
 - i. Subject to eligibility dates, satisfactory performance results in a single-step salary progression on 1 February 2027. (Applies where staff member is not at the top of a salary scale or salary band)
 - Annual APDR salary progression applies to staff in post on 1 September 2026.
 - Biennial APDR salary review applies to staff in post on 1 March 2026.
 - ii. For annual APDRs, Reviewer confirms salary progression decisions.
 - iii. Where the Reviewer is recommending no salary progression, they should outline the reasons, in consultation with Human Resources.
 - iv. For Biennial Review of Professors, salary is reviewed and Reviewers make recommendations to the Vice-Chancellor. Any additional progression step is an exceptional case, which may be recommended by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor where the Professor is performing well above the expectations for their point on the scale.
- (j) Academic Head ensures that all APDRs are completed within the review timeframe and documented appropriately.
- (k) Human Resources Division notifies staff that the APDR is complete and formal feedback is available in APDR System.

11. Further information

- Academic Performance and Development Review webpage www.otago.ac.nz/humanresources/training/academic-staff/academic-pdr
- Progress APDR System <https://corpapp.otago.ac.nz/progress>
- Contact the Human Resources APDR team at hr.academicreviews@otago.ac.nz or by phone on 03 479 8266.