

# Appraisal Policy Principles

## Introduction

As a trade union, ASCL responds to employee-related policy consultations on behalf of our members working in schools, trusts and colleges. This document sets out ASCL's positions and expectations with regards to developing an effective appraisal policy and is endorsed by the **ASCL Conditions and Employment Committee**.

Consultation may take place via joint negotiating committee (JNC) arrangements, trade union recognition agreement/s (TURA/s), and also in direct remote consultations, providing an annotated copy of the document with our comments which we believe, once incorporated, will strengthen the policy.

Once the consultation process has closed, we would be grateful for a copy of the employer's response to all consultees' comments and following the end of the process, a copy of the final adopted policy.

## Meaningful consultation

The ACAS guidance on consultation makes clear that “...consultation involves taking account of as well as listening to the views of employees”. It also states that “whenver employees' views are rejected the reasons for doing so should be carefully explained”. As such, we would expect that an employer responds to all consultees' comments before a policy is finalised, and where comments and recommendations cannot be incorporated, the reasons for not doing so are fully explained.

## Overview

Maintained schools and academies following the STPCD must have an appraisal policy for teachers which is reviewed annually in consultation with the recognised trade unions.

In September 2024, the requirement for schools to operate performance-related pay (PRP) was removed from the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD). This is something ASCL has campaigned for as there is no current evidence to show that performance-related pay impacts positively on pupil outcomes. There is also **evidence** to show that it does not work in schools and that it can be counterproductive and ineffective for staff. Furthermore, the bureaucracy involved in linking performance to pay impacts on workload in a negative way for both the school leaders operating the system and staff being appraised.

## Moving to a Supportive and Developmental Appraisal Policy

**ASCL position:** ASCL believes that all employers should move away from PRP and develop an alternative approach to appraisal which is supportive and developmental, is not linked to pay, and applies to both teachers and leaders.

Moving away from PRP, therefore, requires greater importance being placed on having an effective appraisal process for all staff which provides them with personalised encouragement and bespoke professional growth opportunities.

This view is supported by the DfE in their **recent guidance for schools** which states that “...*the appraisals process should be intrinsically supportive and developmental, conducted within a school culture that values openness and fairness. Appraisal should be a non-bureaucratic process that recognises, encourages and validates a teacher’s commitment to professional development, pedagogical excellence and effective performance. It should offer a supportive and safe environment where individual teachers and their line managers can have open and honest conversations about successes and areas for improvement.*” ASCL fully supports this view.

## Appraisal regulations

Although the requirement to operate PRP has been removed from the STPCD, **Appraisal Regulations** still apply. This means that maintained schools, and those following STPCD must:

- set objectives for teachers including the headteacher. It is important that these are in line with the intention of the change in approach referenced above, i.e. ‘to encourage a commitment to professional development, pedagogical excellence and effective performance.’ It is still the case that objectives should not be arbitrary quantitative targets linked to the performance of one group of students.
- inform teachers (including the headteacher) of the standards against which they will be assessed
- at the end of the appraisal cycle, must provide the teacher with a written appraisal report which includes a review of their progress in achieving their objectives
- Assess the teacher’s professional development needs and identify any action that should be taken to address them
- include a recommendation on pay progression in the appraisal report but it is important to note that this is no longer linked to performance. There are very limited circumstances in which pay progression can be withheld – notably during the period when an individual is subject to formal capability procedures.

## Some important considerations

- **Consistent approach:** ASCL believes that when schools and trusts move away from PRP, a consistent approach should be taken and PRP should be removed for all roles including leadership roles and the central team.
- **Scope of the policy:** the policy should be clear on the scope of staff covered. CEOs and other executive/central roles should be included in the appraisal policy with no reference to PRP or performance management.
- **Policy reviews:** pay and appraisal policies should be reviewed annually. It is advisable to review the appraisal policy alongside the pay policy to ensure that they both reflect any changes made. This is particularly important when breaking the link between pay and performance. We recommend that this document is read alongside ASCL’s **Pay Policy Principles**.

## Pay progression

- Arrangements should be clearly identified in the school, college or trust’s pay policy and this should be independent of the appraisal policy.

- As a reminder, staff should progress within their given pay range on an annual basis unless they are subject to the formal stages of the capability process. Pay progression should recommence if the period of formal capability ends successfully.
- Moving away from PRP does not necessarily mean moving away from enhanced pay progression for a member of staff who has gone above and beyond what should normally be expected of them. Employers may wish to retain the ability to reward staff for this. In this case they should develop clear and robust criteria for enhanced pay progression so this is objective and without preferential bias, and this should be included in the pay policy and consulted on with recognised trade unions.

## Other considerations

**Professional development:** the reason for the removal of the requirement for schools, colleges and trusts to operate PRP is to allow them to have a greater opportunity to focus on professional development in objectives and appraisals.

It is essential that there is investment in a diverse range of professional development opportunities for teachers and support staff. Effective professional development is an integral part of ensuring high-quality teaching and staff motivation.

**Appraisal policy for all staff:** although it is not mandatory to include support staff within an appraisal policy, it is good practice and ASCL strongly advocates this.

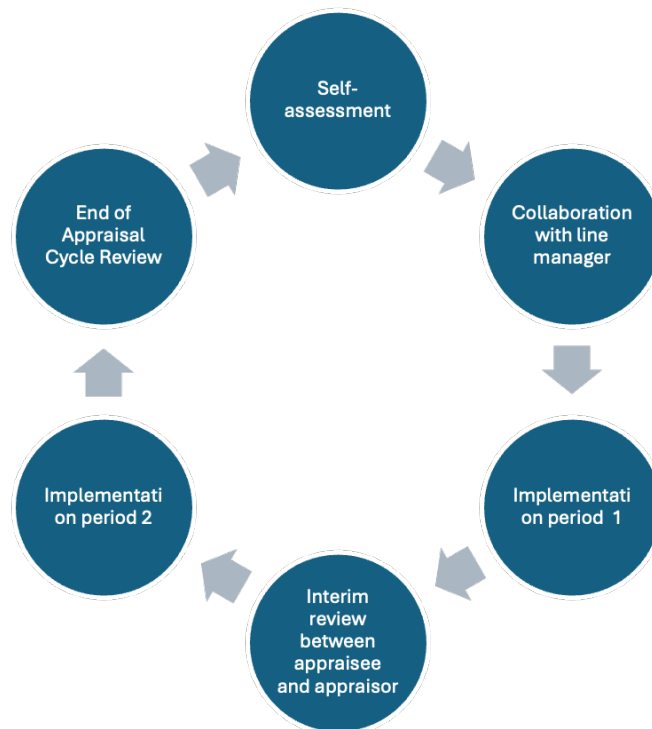
**Reducing workload:** any appraisal system should aim to avoid bureaucracy and minimise the impact on workload for individual teachers, line managers, school leaders and governing boards (from the DfE's **Managing Teachers' and Leaders' Pay**, July 2024). We fully support the DfE's position on this in that "...it should not be necessary for staff to collate large portfolios of evidence for appraisal purposes. Schools should consider the benefits of using online or electronic performance management solutions to help provide a streamlined approach which can not only reduce workload and save time for leaders and teachers but can also assist with identifying and targeting CPD needs."

## Appraisal timescale:

For schools, colleges and trusts, this approach could be mapped over an academic year. Employers may prefer to adopt a term-by-term approach, as modelled in the DfE **Teacher Appraisal Guidance** (July 2024), or a more developmental month-by-month approach aligned with line manager meetings. ASCL does not have a position on the logistics other than it is important that every member of staff has an opportunity to discuss their role, professional growth and contribution to the school, college or trust's vision and strategic improvement.

One example of this approach could start with a self-assessment against agreed standards, meeting and collaborating with their appointed line manager, implementing and reviewing practice, and concluding with an end of cycle review (see figure 1 below).

Figure 1 Appraisal and developing a self-review cycle



The DfE also recommends that there is an annual evaluation at the end of the cycle gathering stakeholder feedback in order to refine and further improve your appraisal policy.

## Conclusion

ASCL's view is that all employers should move away from PRP for all teachers and leaders. We cannot support its continuation.

Moving to a supportive and developmental appraisal system working alongside your pay policy is essential. It can also create the culture within a school, college or trust and aide recruitment and retention. This document, therefore, is to remind employers of their role and responsibilities in this important and transformational process.

## Useful links:

**Changing approaches to appraisal – ASCL and BlueSky Education**

**Teacher appraisal: Guidance for schools – DfE**

**Managing Teachers' and Leaders' Pay – DfE**

**Appraisal regulations**

**STPCD**

**Breaking free from performance-related pay – SecEd article, Louise Hatswell**

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