


PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REVIEW (PDR) POLICY

Summary: This policy outlines our commitment to fostering a culture of continuous professional development (CPD) across the Trust. It ensures that all staff have access to structured learning opportunities, clear performance expectations, and ongoing feedback to support their growth. The policy sets out a framework for professional conversations, goal setting, and career progression, aligning staff development with the Trust’s vision and priorities. By embedding CPD into daily practice, we empower staff to achieve their full potential and contribute to the success of our students and academies.

 If you are unsure about the validity of the content of this policy please refer to the Policy Owner

Please Note: This policy is applicable to All Employees within the Group.

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| Policy owner | HR & Wellbeing Committee (HRWC) |
| Policy holder | Director of People |
| Author | Deborah Rapkins |
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Approved by

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| V2 | Complete re-write to align with new Performance Management System and focus on CPD rather than pay | HRBP’s JCC & ELT Principals | 20/06/25 |
| V2 | Added Our Commitment - statement to link to mission, values and PSED | HRWC | 20/06/25 |

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1. Our Commitment

This policy supports the Trust's mission to ensure all our children and young people are prepared to learn for life by empowering, motivating, and enabling all staff to be the best they can be. It reflects our commitment to the Nolan Principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership. It also aligns with our duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty by advancing equality, eliminating discrimination, and fostering positive relationships.

Through our people policies, we aim to create a culture where every colleague is supported to thrive, so that every child can achieve their full potential and be prepared for the future.

2. Introduction

At Eastern Multi Academy Trust (EMAT) we believe that professional growth is at the heart of what we do. By working together, we ensure that every member of our team is supported to reach their full potential and deliver the highest standards of education, leadership, and support.

We know that our roles can be challenging, but by investing in each other's development, we create a culture where we all thrive. Whether we are in the classroom, supporting students, leading an academy, or working centrally, we all play a part in shaping the future of our learners and communities.

Through ongoing professional development, we strengthen our knowledge, skills, and confidence, ensuring that we grow as individuals while contributing to the success of our academies and the Trust as a whole.

3. Purpose Statement

We recognise that our staff play a crucial role in shaping the future of our students. Their knowledge, skills, experience, and professional growth directly influence student outcomes and academy success. We are committed to fostering a culture of continuous professional development (CPD) that empowers everyone to excel in their role while aligning with our Trust's vision, values, and strategic objectives.

This policy is designed to help us take ownership of our professional growth, ensuring that development is embedded in daily practice and supports high-quality education, leadership, and operational excellence.

2.1 Our approach to professional development:

We believe that professional development should be meaningful, accessible, and responsive to individual needs. Our approach to professional development:

- Helps us set clear goals and work towards them.
- Encourages open and ongoing conversations about growth.
- Ensures we receive timely, constructive feedback and support.
- Provides access to a variety of learning opportunities.
- Recognises and celebrates progress and achievement.

2.2 Creating a Learning Culture

Together, we aim to create a professional development culture where:

- We all understand and share the Trust’s vision, values, and priorities.
- Feedback is open, constructive, and two-way.
- Everyone feels empowered to take ownership of their development.
- Plans are realistic, achievable, and responsive to our evolving needs.
- We continuously learn from each other and strive for improvement.

2.3 The Purpose of This Policy

This Professional Development Policy supports our commitment to:

- Enabling staff to achieve their full potential.
- Aligning professional development with the Trust’s strategic priorities.
- Promoting a culture of continuous learning, feedback, and improvement.
- Providing clear guidance on development opportunities and performance conversations.
- Recognising and valuing staff contributions through structured growth pathways.

By working together, we create an environment where learning is embedded in everything we do, where staff feel supported and empowered, and where leadership decisions are informed by best practice and evidence-based planning. Through continuous reflection and shared learning, we drive improvement and ensure that we are always growing - both as individuals and as a Trust.

4. Scope

This policy applies to everyone working in the Trust, including:

- Teaching staff
- Support staff
- Leadership teams
- Central Trust colleagues

This policy does not apply to Trustees, Governors, or Volunteers, as their learning and development needs are addressed separately through dedicated training and support frameworks.

We are committed to ensuring that professional development is inclusive, accessible, and applied fairly across all roles, in line with our approach to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

We all have a role to play in creating a culture where professional growth is valued and supported:

Trust Board and Trustees

- Provide strategic direction and support for professional development.
- Ensure that professional growth is embedded within the Trust’s improvement strategy.
- Hold Executive Leadership Team accountable for the impact of professional development.
- Appoint trustees to the CEO’s PDR panel, including an independent external advisor with the necessary skills and qualifications.

CEO and Executive Leadership Team

- Champion a culture of learning, growth, and high performance.
- Ensure that development opportunities align with EMAT’s strategic priorities.
- Monitor, evaluate and calibrate the effectiveness and impact of professional development across the Trust.

Principals and Senior Leaders

- Create a culture where CPD is embedded in daily practice.
- Ensure that all colleagues have access to meaningful development opportunities.
- Foster an environment of coaching, mentoring, and continuous feedback.
- Monitor, evaluate and calibrate the impact of professional development across the Academy/Function.
- Keep a record of performance conversations and development plans in the performance management system (Trinity).

Line Managers

- Have regular, meaningful and development conversations with staff and ensure they are recorded in Trinity.
- Support colleagues in identifying and accessing relevant learning opportunities.
- Encourage staff to take ownership of their professional growth, reflect on their progress and share best practice.
- Ensure CPD activities are relevant, accessible, and impactful.

All Employees

- Take an active role in our own professional development and performance conversations.
- Apply learning to improve our performance and contribute to academy/department improvement.
- Engage in feedback and development conversations with openness and curiosity.
- Support and learn from each other by sharing best practices, knowledge and experiences.

People Services (HR)

- Provide guidance and training for managers on implementing professional development practices.
- Support the development and delivery of CPD initiatives across the Trust.
- Ensure that performance and development conversations are conducted fairly and consistently.
- Monitor trends in staff development needs and advise on strategic workforce planning.
- Support managers in recording and monitoring performance development data in Trinity.
- Maintain systems for recording CPD participation and evaluating its impact.

6. Professional Development Framework

5.1 Performance and Development Cycle

Professional development is an ongoing process and we embed it into our daily work through structured conversations, goal-setting, and reflection. It is a continuous cycle of planning, implementation, and review. The process includes:

1. Goal-Setting & Development Planning (Start of the Academic Year)
 - You set your personal and professional development goals in collaboration with your line manager, ensuring alignment with Academy and Trust priorities.
 - Your objectives are recorded in the performance management system (Trinity).
2. Regular Check-ins & Feedback (Throughout the Year)
 - You engage in ongoing discussions about your progress, receive feedback, and adjust your plans as needed.

- Progress updates, feedback and further development needs are recorded in the performance management system (Trinity).
3. Mid-Year Review (Spring Term)
 - You reflect on your achievements so far and refine your goals and development plans.
 - You have a discussion about your aspirations, career progression and opportunities which is recorded in performance management system (Trinity).
 - You and your manager individually complete the Talent Snapshot form on the performance management system (Trinity).
 4. End-of-Year Review (Summer Term)
 - You assess your progress against objectives and the job description, celebrate successes, and plan for future growth.
 - You have a conversation with your line manager about your performance over the year.
 - You and your manager individually complete the Performance Snapshot form on the performance management system (Trinity).

5.2 Professional Development Opportunities

To support career growth, we provide a variety of CPD opportunities, including:

- Formal Training & Qualifications
 - Accredited courses (NPQs, Masters, SEND qualifications, etc.).
 - Subject-specific training and leadership development programmes.
- Collaborative Learning
 - Peer coaching and mentoring.
 - Professional learning communities (PLCs) and subject networks.
- Reflective Practice & Feedback
 - Lesson observations and reflective practice groups.
 - Peer-to-peer and 360° feedback
 - Self-assessments.
- External Engagement & Research
 - Attendance at educational conferences and seminars.
 - Participation in research projects and action research., reflective practice, peer-to-peer and 360° feedback.

5.3 Career Development & Progression

We are committed to supporting career growth at all levels and identifying and nurturing talent across the Trust by:

- Encouraging progression within and beyond our academies.
- Supporting staff to access secondments and internal promotions.
- Offering leadership development programmes.
- Providing structured pathways for career progression.
- Offering shadowing, and coaching opportunities.

Our professional development process helps us all identify and work towards career aspirations, ensuring colleagues are well-prepared for future opportunities.

7. Everyday Conversations Framework

We embed professional development in everyday conversations, helping us all to reflect, grow, and improve.

Types of Performance Conversations:

- Onboarding Conversations - Early support for new colleagues.
- Check-In Conversations - Regular discussions about progress and feedback.
- Career Conversations - Exploring aspirations, motivations, future roles and opportunities.
- Wellbeing Conversations - Supporting colleagues in balancing professional demands and ensuring that you feel supported in your roles.
- Re-Alignment Conversations - Addressing concerns and refocusing goals.

By talking regularly about our development, we make formal reviews more natural and productive.

8. End of Year Review

At the end of the academic year, we reflect on our performance, development, achievements, and aspirations. This review helps to:

- Assess progress against personal objectives.
- Consider the impact of CPD on pupil outcomes and academy performance.
- Recognise and celebrate progress.
- Identify areas for further growth
- Assess readiness for future roles and leadership opportunities
- Inform future professional development plans.

Outcomes of this review will inform future CPD opportunities, career pathways and identify high potential staff for leadership positions. For those eligible, the review may also contribute to decisions about pay progression (e.g. UPR).

To ensure that you receive the recognition-based and the cost of living pay increases, it's important to actively participate in the PDR cycle, complete your talent snapshots, and aim for a performance rating of 'Achieving' or higher.

If you have a formal disciplinary sanction or are on a performance improvement plan, this may also impact these annual pay awards. For more detailed information, please refer to the EMAT Pay Policy.

9. Ensuring Fairness & Consistency

To ensure fairness across the Trust, we:

- Use a structured framework to guide discussions and decisions.
- Hold calibration meetings where leaders review ratings together.
- Provide training for people managers to support fair and meaningful conversations.

We are committed to ensuring that professional development is applied consistently and equitably across all roles.

The Trust will also regularly evaluate the effectiveness of CPD activities through:

- Staff surveys and feedback.
- Performance data and student outcomes analysis.
- Peer reviews and external evaluations.

Findings will be used to improve CPD offerings and ensure alignment with educational best practices.

10. If You Have Concerns

If you feel that your professional development needs have not been met or that the process has not been followed fairly, you may:

- Raise your concerns with your line manager.
- Request a review by a senior leader.
- Seek advice from the People Services team.

We encourage open and constructive discussions to resolve any concerns.

11. Data Protection & Confidentiality

All data collected as part of the CPD and performance review process will be handled in accordance with GDPR and the Trust's data protection policies.

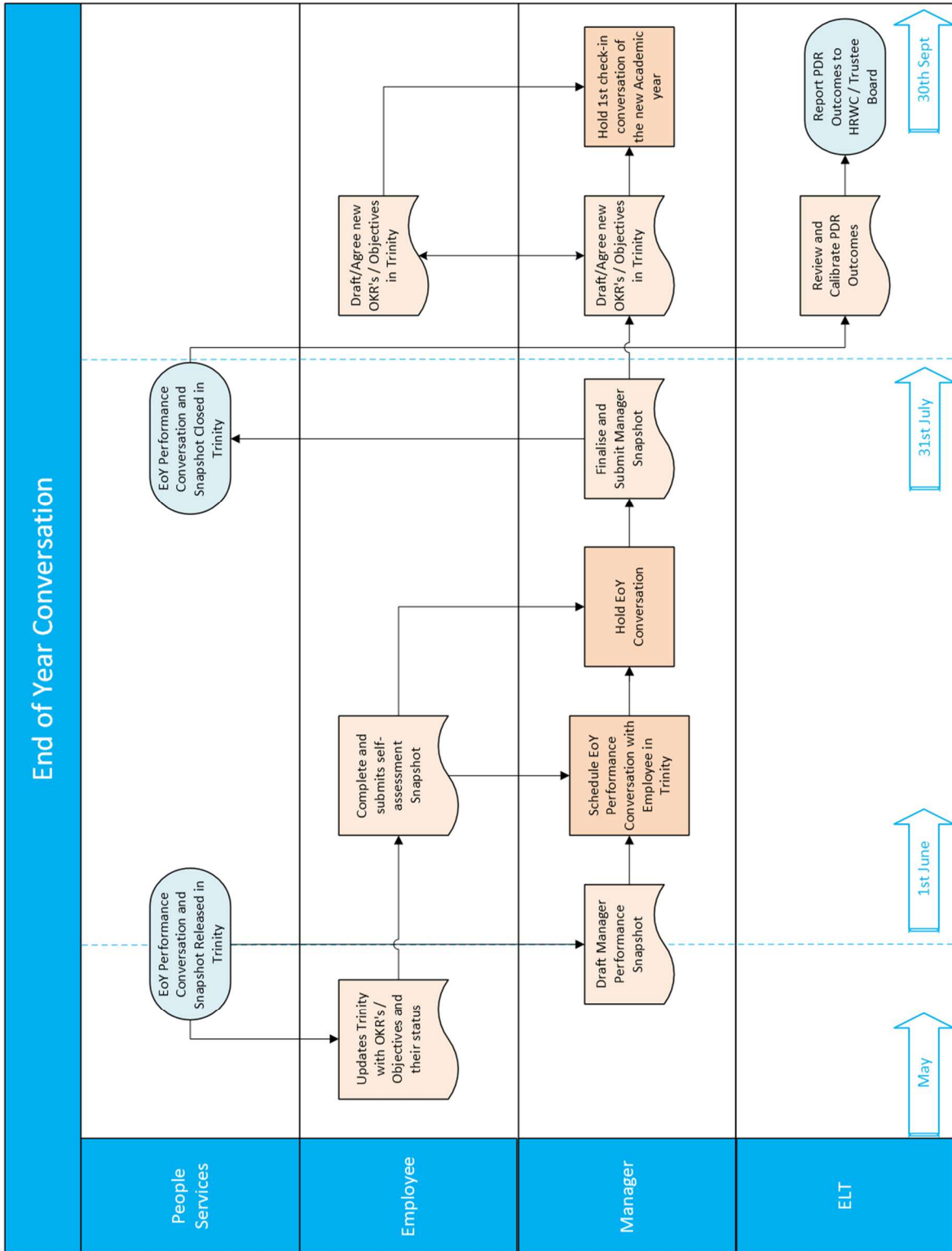
12. Related Documents and Further Guidance

This policy is linked to the following policies and procedures:

- PDR Procedure and Guidance documents
- Performance Improvement Policy
- Induction and Onboarding Policy
- Wellbeing Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Resolution Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Pay Policy

PDR Process Flowchart – What Happens & When

End of Year Performance Conversation – Summer Term



Mid-Year Career Conversation – Spring Term

