



STAFF TALENT DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Document Version	Version 1
Document Owner	Human Resources
Approved by	Executive Committee
Date	06 November 2023
Consulted with	Unite
Date	04 November 2024
Approved by	People & Culture Committee
Date	06 February 2025
Approved by	Governing Authority
Date	25 February 2025
Effective Date:	25 February 2025
Scheduled Review Date:	25 February 2030

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The University values all staff and recognises the need for staff to have the relevant knowledge, skills and competencies to carry out their role. As reflected in the University of Limerick Strategic Plan, the University is committed to supporting staff to foster their talent, thus enabling them to reach their professional potential. The University's success depends on the continued engagement, innovation and commitment of staff who work within a dynamic and ever-changing environment. A growth mindset is critical to the ongoing success of the University. It is important that staff take responsibility for their own development and should also be enabled to contribute fully in their role, and to the goals of their Department / Division and the University.

The aim of this policy is to outline how the University supports and encourages staff talent development in line with the goals of the University of Limerick's Strategic Plan. Responsibility for career development lies with the individual staff member. It is important to recognise the value of ongoing development in the context of achieving University and personal career goals. This should all be in a supportive and collegiate environment where excellence is fostered.

The purpose of staff development is to:

- Foster a high-performance organisation by enabling staff to contribute effectively to the ambitious goals of the University.
- Nurture talent and enable staff so that they can develop to their full potential.
- Support colleagues to develop the knowledge, skills and competencies required for their role.
- Support the professional development of staff across the University, while encouraging responsibility for career development.
- Support a culture of equality, inclusivity and diversity across the University.
- Foster a culture of inclusivity and collegiality across the University.
- Ensure compliance with regulatory and statutory requirements.
- Facilitate and contribute to the agenda of innovation and continual improvement across the University.
- Promote and enable operational excellence in support of the University's ambitious goals.

1.2 Scope

1.2.1 To whom does the policy apply?

This policy applies to all staff of the University of Limerick.

1.2.2 In what situations does the policy apply?

This policy applies to employees at all times during the conduct of their duties for the University.

In addition to centrally organised development programmes, staff development is additionally supported through a number of centrally resourced benefits including Paid Study and Examination Leave; Sabbatical Leave; Further Study Policy etc. Details of these are available on the policy hub and the HR website.

1.2.3 Who is responsible for ensuring that the policy (and any associated procedure) is implemented and monitored?

The HR Director is responsible for ensuring that the policy is implemented as approved.

The Head of Staff Talent Development is responsible for executing procedural elements. The following parties have responsibility for staff talent development.

Individuals should:

- Take responsibility for their own development. In addition to undertaking mandatory training, they are expected to avail themselves of the development opportunities provided to enable them to keep their skills updated and respond flexibly to change.
- Be familiar with this policy and ensure that they adhere to the provisions of the policy.
- In consultation with their manager, identify and agree their own training and development needs through PDRs and other appropriate mechanisms.
- Adopt a growth mindset and creatively consider the possibilities for innovation and ambition, and how focusing on their development can help to achieve this.
- Seek and undertake training as appropriate for their role.
- Seek manager approval for attending courses.
- Take responsibility for transfer of learning back into their role.
- Take a broad view of staff development opportunities. There are many types of staff development opportunities, and these should all be considered, including on-the-job opportunities, learning from other organisations, work shadowing, etc., as well as development programmes.

Managers should:

- Ensure that all staff can access and attend all training to enable them in their job including that delivered centrally and at local level.
- Discuss development needs of staff. This includes within four weeks of starting a new role; during probation meetings; at PDR meetings; at other meetings during the year.
- Foster accountability for team members' own career success within a supportive environment.
- Make every effort to support development in other ways including identifying on-the-job development opportunities, projects, and coaching conversations.
- Actively support the development of their staff, provide appropriate opportunities for their staff to participate in talent development initiatives and proactively support the application of their learning back in the role.
- Approve staff attendance at training courses.
- Be responsible for their team's completion of any mandatory or governance related training.

HR Talent Development unit are responsible for:

- Providing effective staff talent development opportunities.
- Identifying University training needs, designing and selecting methods, through to the delivery and evaluation of interventions.
- Procuring external providers in line with University policy and procedures.
- Effectively managing external service providers to ensure quality of service.
- Providing all line managers and those involved in the identification and prioritisation of staff development activities with relevant support.
- Providing an advisory service to Heads of Department, line managers, staff and University networks and committees on the staff development field.
- Maintaining effective partnerships with all stakeholders including departments, trade union and other staff development providers.
- Ensuring such activities are conducted in line with the University's Equality and Human Rights Strategy.
- Maintaining accurate training records.
- Evaluating staff development activities in order to assure and enhance their quality and monitor quality in line with KPIs.

The HR Talent Development unit is responsible for providing opportunities in line with priorities and budgets. Individual career development is the responsibility of each staff member.

1.3 Definitions

1.3.1 Staff Talent Development

Staff Talent Development refers to training required for staff to perform effectively in their jobs. It also includes supports for staff members acquiring knowledge and skills applicable beyond their present jobs, thus enhancing the organization's future capacity to grow and develop.

This includes activities such as attendance at training courses, workshops, seminars, etc. It includes peer learning (including mentoring/coaching) as well as e-learning opportunities. It also includes work shadowing, project work, and reflective practice.

The Talent Development unit offers development opportunities in the areas of:

- **Leadership and Management**
- **University Mentoring Scheme**
- **Mandatory training and good practice/governance training**
- **Development of Research Skills for Academic and Research Staff**
- **Professional Development including Operational Excellence and Personal Skills**
- **Induction for New Staff**
- **UL Performance and Development Reviews (PDRs)**
- **Career Development Programmes**

Development activities that are not relevant to the role or goals of the University are not within the scope of this policy.

2 Context

2.1 Legal and Regulatory Context

The right to equal access to development opportunities is protected under the following legislation: Protection of Employees (Fixed Term Work) Act 2003, Protection of Employees (Part-Time Work) Act 2001, Employment Equality Acts (1998-2015).

Sections 12 and 13 (objects and functions) of the Universities Act, 1997 emphasise the obligation of continual improvement and the requirement to educate, train and retrain higher level professional, technical and managerial personnel.

2.2 Other Context

2.2.1 Compliance with Legislation and University Governance

Certain training programmes will be mandatory in order to meet our obligations under EU / national legislation and in accordance with the governance of the University. This will be as outlined to staff through UL Connect.

2.2.2 University Strategy and Values

This policy is in line with the University of Limerick's strategic plan and University values. In its strategic plan, the University places a strong emphasis on fostering a positive, high-performance culture and sets out its support for dedicated development opportunities for all staff cohorts. This policy and associated development opportunities emphasise and support the values of the University.

3 Policy Statements

3.1 Principles for Staff Talent Development Policy

3.1.1 Commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity

Training opportunities, content and structures will reflect our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusivity.

3.1.2 Contribution to University Goals and Values

Development opportunities should contribute to the achievement of the strategic goals and values of the University of Limerick through development of skills required for the job or to build future capacity.

3.1.3 Responsibility

Responsibility for individual career success lies with the individual, in a supportive environment.

3.1.4 Address Training Needs Identified

The training needs identified through mechanisms described in Section 4.1 below provide the basis for defining the University's Talent Development plan.

3.1.5 Collaboration

The HR Talent Development unit works cooperatively with all committees, departments and units delivering internal training including Library, Research Office, Centre for Transformative Learning, MarComms, Graduate School, UL@Work, ITD, Language Centre, Aonad na Gaeilge, Finance, Corporate Secretary's Office, Academic Registry, Student Affairs and HR colleagues.

3.1.6 Resources and Budgetary Constraints

The HR Talent Development unit takes every opportunity to maximise the resources available for training and development activities. The Talent Development Unit operates within budgetary constraints and must adhere to available budget.

Individual training requests are also subject to budgetary considerations and constraints. Any individual requests must be considered in line with available budgets at unit level and should be based on annual unit planning from needs identified during the PDR process.

3.1.7 Quality of Service Provision

Participants in training courses have the opportunity to provide feedback at the end of all programmes. This is actively monitored and acted on as appropriate. Programmes and needs are continually reviewed in order to provide high quality, relevant programmes with impact.

3.1.8 Balance of Organisational Needs

An appropriate balance must be struck between the desire for individual staff members to maximise their potential and for the University to obtain a return on its investment in staff development.

The Talent Development Unit will aim to provide relevant support to individual departments, subject to budgetary and resourcing considerations.

3.1.9 Supportive Culture

The University strives to create and foster a culture that is supportive of colleagues and conducive to development.

3.1.10 Compliance and Governance

The University of Limerick provides mandatory training for all of our staff to ensure up to date knowledge and understanding of key elements of legislation and good practice. Some training will be mandatory, and all staff of the University will be required to complete this.

4 Related Procedures for Staff Talent Development

4.1 Identify Training Needs

Training Needs are identified through the following mechanisms: review of strategic priorities, input from Executive Committee, manager input, Training Needs Analysis, feedback from PDRs, staff surveys, evaluation of current programmes, and external scoping.

The annual training plan and budget are approved by the HR Director.

Training will be prioritised based on identified needs and the strategic priorities of the University.

4.2 Delivering Training

Talent Development opportunities will be publicised using the appropriate available mechanisms, including the Talent Development website and UL Connect as appropriate.

Staff can submit a request to take part in training courses as outlined in the advert. For a small number of courses, such as courses where there is high demand, there may be an application or nomination process. Information on the application process will be included when the relevant courses are publicised. Such applications will be considered in line with this policy.

Charges and Cancellations. Charges for attendance on centrally organised courses are usually paid through a central budget and so no cost applies to the department or individual. Some courses will include a charge back to the individual's department/division. If, however, an individual cancels within 48 hours of the course or fails to attend on the day (with the exception of illness or extenuating circumstances) €100 will be charged back to the staff member's department.

Reasonable accommodation will be made for any staff member with a disability to access development opportunities.

Staff Development organised through the HR Talent Development unit will normally take place during office hours and on UL Campus.

4.3 Training Evaluation and Impact

The quality of training provision is important. All training participants will be given the opportunity to provide an evaluation of training courses. Feedback is reviewed as part of the HR Division's quality system and feedback will be acted on appropriately.

The University of Limerick's development opportunities will form part of employer of choice campaigns.

Training/development metrics will be reported externally as appropriate.

Links to other University metrics are considered on an ongoing basis as appropriate.

5 Related Documents

- i. Further Study Policy
- ii. Erasmus Staff Mobility Funding
- iii. PDR Documentation
- iv. Probation Policy
- v. New Starter Checklist
- vi. Six Month Checklist for New Staff
- vii. Policy for Retention of Academic Staff