Performance (Talent) Management in Higher Education – Developing the Project

Performance for All (PFA) is a project run by universities for universities. For two years we have been working with over 50 HE institutions in five countries to understand and develop best in class performance management approaches, solutions and processes for the Higher Education (HE) environment. PFA is led by a steering group of HR Directors from across our diverse HE sector.

PFA is about understanding, addressing and sharing the specific challenges of improving individual and organisational performance in HE today. As well as developing a comprehensive online system and ways of working to support this, PFA members are also invited to local, regional and national knowledge sharing and development workshops and conferences. To make sure we understand what can be achieved and what will maximise its benefit, PFA has recently commissioned an academic study to inform and support approaches, development activities and return on investment metrics.

What does PFA do?

The PFA project is designed to help HE institutions put in place the systems, processes, ways of working and reporting that will maximise the performance of the organisation by maximising the performance of its people.

"The pressure on universities from increased competition and greater student voice is likely to lead to only the most effective and efficient universities succeeding in the medium and long term. "
Ronnie Magee, HR Director, University of Ulster (November PFA conference)

In all 50 of the HE institutions we have worked with, different parts of the organisation have had different strengths and areas for improvement. PFA is designed to ensure that where an organisation (or team) has good processes and practice in place; these are retained and built upon.

What can PFA do for me?

The PFA team and its partners can work with your organisation and individual teams to help understand current practice in more detail and identify opportunities for improvement. We are HE people doing this for HE organisations, and so understand the challenges our particular culture faces (as well as the tremendous opportunities if we get things right).

Performance for All has developed, for both academic and support staff, an online system and ways of working which can be used institution-wide to help fill the gaps. This has been designed to integrate easily and seamlessly with your existing systems and to be customised and implemented at different rates in different parts of the institution. If you already have systems or processes which are effective (for example HR/LMS/Research Output systems) we would look to complement these, not to replace them.

PFA partners can start by implementing our highly acclaimed online review process across parts of / the entire organisation. This is quick and simple to implement, and adds immediate value with minimal change. It is also designed to be used as a foundation for introducing more sophisticated functionality over time.

PFA also provides its members with:

- **PFA Readiness Assessments:** We consider your existing ways of working and what the actual, measurable benefits of working with PFA would be for you. We suggest the options, timescales and likely success of implementing performance management systems in specific teams/parts of your organisation.

- **Implementation planning:** Drawing on our experience of what works and what doesn't work in over 50 universities, we can support you throughout the entire implementation process, from defining success criteria to ensuring positive buy-in from both your support staff, your academics and leaders.

- **Training and coaching:** Where it is required, we can engage and train your people in new ways of thinking and working.

- **Local, regional and national workshops:** We run regular workshops designed to share knowledge, experience and to develop new ideas. Recent workshops have covered topics such as academic staff engagement and building the business case for performance management.

PFA has developed a suite of online tools which integrate with your existing systems and can deliver:

- Online appraisal/review

- Organisation, team and individual goal alignment and communication

- Staff development:

  - Compulsory training (e.g. health and safety, diversity, fire, environment)

  - Induction and probation processes, exit interviews and 360 tools

  - Behaviours, values and competency frameworks

  - Course / activity management and booking

- Succession planning

- Talent management

If your University is not already a member of PFA (see web site for membership **www.performanceforall.org**), for information about joining please contact:
Christian Carter, PFA Project Manager
christian.carter@bristol.ac.uk