

# New EBF-based SDPR+ template trial

- Faculty of Engineering & Design
- Faculty of Humanities & Social Science



February 2018

## 1. Background

The annual Staff Development and Performance Review with EBF (SDPR+) has been in place for several years. The SDPR+ form includes a self-assessment for staff against each of the 9 professional behaviours of the EBF, along with a review of the previous year's performance, year-ahead goal setting and professional development needs analysis. Whilst the conversations in SDPR+ are beneficial, the form itself is considered onerous and extremely time consuming – in most cases SDPR+ forms are 10+ pages - such that the focus has become form completion rather than the substance of the discussion itself.

In summer 2017, as part of the 2016/17 SDPR process, the Faculties of Engineering & Design and Humanities & Social Sciences trialled a new approach to the annual for professional services teams including a new SDPR template. The aim of the new approach was to:

- Encourage positive, constructive SDPR conversations that highlight professional behaviours as articulated in the Effective Behaviours Framework (EBF) – ie it's not just *what* we do, but *how* do it- acknowledging that each and every individual will naturally excel in some behavioural areas and struggle with others
- Capture these conversations in a less onerous, easy to use form that allows time to focus on the discussion

## 2. Pre-trial preparation in HSS

The HSS programme administration team prepared for the trial as follows:

- Training was provided for line managers by Loretta Gibson and Elise Merker. Using the Effective Behaviours Framework, the Programmes Officers focussed on identifying what 'excellence, good and areas for improvement' looks like for their particular teams, and how to set objectives to either build upon areas of excellence or to find tools to overcome challenging areas.

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For example, for the behaviour 'Working with people' for a Programmes Administrator:

	<p><b>Working with people</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works co-operatively and is a supportive member of the team / group</li> <li>• Contributes positively to the achievement of team objectives</li> <li>• Fosters a collaborative team-working environment</li> <li>• Actively helps and supports others to achieve team goals</li> <li>• Builds effective working relationships in order to provide information and enhance service</li> <li>• Nurtures relationships and contacts, both internal and external, as sources of information and expertise to support work activities</li> <li>• Uses internal / external networks and relationships to identify and develop opportunities which may be of relevant to Team</li> <li>• Acts as a role model to others by setting high personal standards in both verbal and non-verbal communication</li> <li>• Co-operates willingly to support the achievement of team goals</li> <li>• Uses understanding of other people's perspectives to help reach agreement</li> <li>• Communicates effectively by sharing relevant information and keeping others informed</li> <li>• Recognises and respects the roles, responsibilities, interests and concerns of colleagues and stakeholders</li> <li>• Surfaces conflicts early so that they may be addressed</li> <li>• Wins support of key colleagues and other stakeholders</li> <li>• Demonstrates honesty and integrity by sharing the credit with others</li> <li>• Recognises others' contribution to the achievement of objectives</li> </ul>		
	<p><b>Examples of Excellence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acts as a mentor for new staff</li> <li>• Proactively contributes to the training/induction of new staff</li> <li>• Instigates opportunities to build a positive working environment for team members</li> <li>• Shares good practices with others</li> <li>• Supports other people's ideas and takes note</li> <li>• Offers support or help without being asked</li> <li>• Contributes to the wider team</li> <li>• Is aware of own behaviour</li> <li>• Networks to seek new contacts</li> </ul>	<p><b>Examples of Doing a Good Job</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acts as a cooperative team member</li> <li>• Helps out when asked or directed by line manager</li> <li>• Checks with others before taking leave</li> <li>• Contributes to meetings and training</li> <li>• Is willing to offer advice</li> <li>• Actively participates within the team environment</li> <li>• Attends coffee meetings, leaving events etc</li> </ul>	<p><b>Examples Where Improvement is Needed</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refuses to help others when asked</li> <li>• Causes conflict in the team</li> <li>• Leaves it to others to cover during absences</li> <li>• Does not consider others when taking annual leave, flexi time eg knowingly leaves work for others to pick up without pre-planning</li> <li>• Consistently negatively impacts on the workload of others</li> <li>• Expects others to create good team environments</li> <li>• Undermines the ideas of others, is discouraging</li> <li>• Does not collaborate</li> <li>• Does not attend team meetings</li> <li>• Behaves inappropriately</li> <li>• Is not aware of other people or accepting of other's opinions</li> </ul>

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- The outcomes of this training sessions informed creation of resources for other line managers, available on the wiki here:

<https://wiki.bath.ac.uk/display/AMERFM/The+EBF+and+Staff+Development+-+using+the+SDPR+to+explore+professional+behaviours>

- All team members were asked to complete the [Robertson-Cooper i-resilience questionnaire](#) to aid self-reflection before completing the form. The outcomes of the questionnaire were mapped against the EBF in order to provide insights into behaviours that improve resilience in the workplace.
- Team leaders discussed the new approach and the new form with their teams before SDPR meetings, taking the opportunity to encourage team members to be positive and open-minded when completing the form.

### 3. Pre-trial preparation in E&D

The E&D team did not carry out any bespoke preparation for rolling out the new form. SDPR meetings were held as in the past but the trial form was used in replace of the old form.

### 4. Trialled form: New behavioural self-assessment table

The new form contains the same approach to reviewing performance for the previous year, focussing on agreed objectives and an overview of the whole year. The next section of the form is a self-assessment of the EBF, categorised into Excellent, I Can Do Better, and Good in a 'traffic light' format. This is then followed by a development or training needs section and final comments section as per the existing form. The new table is detailed on the following page.

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**Section 2: Self-assessment of professional behaviours**

*Reflect on your work over the past year and make an assessment of demonstrated strengths and development needs against the behavioural domains of the Effective Behaviours Framework for Management, Specialist and Administration job family.*

*For each behaviour, assess yourself on the following scale: Excellent (doing well and going the extra mile); Good (doing what needs to be done in the job); or I can do better*

*Objectives for next year can be agreed at the meeting.*

Self assessment	Behaviour	Your comments and evidence	Any development needs	Objective for next year	Feedback by reviewer
<b>Excellent</b> Doing well and going the extra mile	Choose an item.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.
	Choose an item.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.
	Choose an item.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.
<b>I can do better</b>	Choose an item.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.
	Choose an item.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.
	Choose an item.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.
<b>Good</b> Doing what needs to be done in the job	Choose an item.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.
	Choose an item.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.
	Choose an item.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.

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### 5. Feedback:

Following the trial, a wash-up session was held with ten line managers representing both HSS and E&D. At this session, line managers provided personal and team member feedback on the new look form, whether conversations flowed more easily and whether or not the new approach was deemed to be an overall success. Some provided specific (anonymous) examples of positive conversations and gave examples of behaviour-based objectives. Overall the feedback from both managers and team members was overwhelmingly positive.

In summary the key positive points from HSS were:

- Team members felt the approach less critical and more constructive as the template facilitates discussion about excellence as well as areas for improvement, without focusing purely on work outputs
- The HSS training was particularly useful for line managers as they felt well prepared
- The i-resilience questionnaire was helpful in encouraging self-reflection
- The form is much quicker and easier to complete. Average forms are around 5 pages long
- The form, along with the HSS training, encouraged open, positive conversations
- The form encourages conversations around development, eg by looking for training that might help the individual deal with challenging situations or to push them outside of their comfort zone
- The HSS team found it helpful to advise their team members of the new form and new approach beforehand, allowing an opportunity to raise and address any concerns before the SDPR meeting
- In cases where line managers disagreed with the individual's self-assessment, it was nevertheless possible to have a positive conversation about why they may disagree - but ultimately areas of excellence, good and for improvement were always agreed
- Many individuals struggled to identify what might be considered 'good', however line managers were able to unpick this further in the SDPR meetings through constructive conversations based on the training they had participated in earlier
- Line managers felt the new approach enabled them to have difficult conversations about problematic behaviour as these were offset by positive conversations about good and excellent behaviour.

Feedback from E&D:

- Overall the E&D team were positive but felt less prepared than the HSS team
- The form is much easier to complete, the drop-down lists are very helpful
- E&D line managers were very keen to have the same training as offered in HSS

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Issues raised were:

- The traffic-light colour coding and some of the wording was considered to be too negative by some
- There was no space on the form for team objectives
- It wasn't clear how/where to set SMART objectives where relevant
- It was too overwhelming to try to categorise each of the 9 behaviours.

As a result, the following actions were agreed:

- Include a space for team and/or SMART objectives
- Change the traffic-light coding and wording to be less confronting
- Choose one important and relevant behaviour to focus on for each of the three self-assessment areas. Some individuals and their line manager might decide to choose more than one if appropriate. This can easily be done by adding additional lines within the table
- Offer training for line managers on how to have behaviour-based performance conversations and setting behaviour-based objectives that will:
  - Make the most of areas of behavioural excellence for the benefit of the individual and the team
  - Encourage an individual to overcome an area they find challenging that may be a barrier to career progression
  - Push an individual out of their comfort zone, with the aim of this area moving from 'good to excellent' or 'area to work on to good' next year
- Suggest team leaders discuss the new form and related conversations with the team before SDPR meetings
- Continue to build resources on the wiki to allow for sharing of best practice with colleagues

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## 6. New form: New behavioural self-assessment table

The new form includes the changes agreed above:

**Section 2: Self-assessment of professional behaviours**

*Reflect on your work over the past year and make an assessment of demonstrated strengths and development needs against the behavioural domains of the Effective Behaviours Framework for Management, Specialist and Administration job family. Assess yourself on the following scale: Excellent (doing well and going the extra mile); Good (doing what needs to be done in the job); or areas I would like to work on, choosing one behaviour in each category. Objectives for next year can be agreed at the meeting.*

Self-assessment	Behaviour	Your comments and evidence	Feedback by reviewer	Ideas or requests for development opportunities	Objective for next year
Excellent: Doing well and going the extra mile	Choose an item.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.
Good: Doing what needs to be done in the job	Choose an item.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.
Areas I would like to work on	Choose an item.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.

**Optional Team or SMART Objectives:**

Relevant Behaviour/s	Objective	Measures	Timelines
Choose an item.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.
Choose an item.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.
Choose an item.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.

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A completed self-assessment table might look like this:

Self-assessment	Behaviour	Your comments and evidence	Feedback by reviewer	Ideas or requests for development opportunities	Objective for next year
<b>Excellent: Doing well and going the extra mile</b>	Finding innovative solutions	I am really pleased with my efforts in helping the faculty implement the new marks entry process this year. I enjoyed the challenge as it gave me an opportunity to highlight and utilise my creative yet methodical way of thinking. I am enjoying be a part of the assessment working group and would like to be a part of more University-wide initiatives if possible.	Veruca found an efficient and innovative way to implement the new marks entry process. She did this by taking time to understand what was required, trialled a few options, then decided on the best approach. This proved to be of great benefit to the rest of the team.  Veruca has benefitted from participating in initiatives such as the assessment working group. This has raised her profile across the university where her expertise has been highlighted.	I am interested in becoming a processfix champion and participating in relevant process improvement exercises.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enrol as a Processfix champion and contribute to a process improvement exercise related to programme admin</li> <li>Write up guidance notes on the new marks entry process for sharing with colleagues on the wiki</li> </ol>
<b>Good: Doing what needs to be done in the job</b>	Achieving results	I believe I have worked hard during a challenging time for the team to keep on top of my workload in an efficient manner. My DoS has commented on the excellent support I have provided as she knows I will always get the job done to a high standard. As I am keen to progress my career I would be interested in contributing to projects to gain additional experience that might help me take the next step.	Veruca has kept on top of her workload despite the new processes implemented and changes to her team. She is interested in taking on new projects as she has good organisational skills.	Leading on projects/project support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend a project management course</li> <li>Support the Director of Learning and Teaching in Phase 1 of the curriculum transformation project for the MEng Chocolate Making</li> </ol>

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Self-assessment	Behaviour	Your comments and evidence	Feedback by reviewer	Ideas or requests for development opportunities	Objective for next year
Areas I could work on	Working with people	<p>I am a bit embarrassed about the assistant invigilator incident this year as I had thought I understood the process but clearly didn't take enough care. I now appreciate the impact this had on the students and the team and will make an effort to be more considerate in the future.</p> <p>I am also interested in gaining some experience in training/delegating work so that I can get a sense of line management. I know I tend to be a bit possessive of my work so it would be good to learn how to effectively delegate and develop others.</p>	<p>Veruca explained that she is very protective of her work and likes to maintain control – this means she doesn't want to delegate to others. This has resulted in her being overloaded during peak periods as well as lost opportunities for others. If Veruca is to progress her career and take on line management it would be helpful for her to learn how to effectively delegate and train others within the context of her faculty team and her current role. This will provide her with an opportunity to broaden her skills whilst helping to develop others. This will require her to have patience and learn how to work more collaboratively.</p> <p>Also, there were issues with the employment of students for exam invigilation this year. This was problematic for the students and the team. During the SDPR meetings, Veruca admitted that she did not understand the new UKVI right to work requirements and was embarrassed about the error she had made. She agreed that it would be helpful to create a checklist of necessary actions required for all aspects of exam</p>	<p>I am keen to gain line management skills in order to strengthen my CV.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Take an active role in training new members of the programme admin team in local processes and procedures</li> <li>6. Create a checklist of actions required to organise exams, and identify which of these activities may be delegated to an admin assistant or other team members</li> <li>7. Proactively work with Charlie Bucket by training him on some programme admin duties eg exam organisation , or any other relevant opportunities identified and agreed with Charlie's line manager</li> <li>8. Undertake Step Up to Management training</li> </ol>

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Self-assessment	Behaviour	Your comments and evidence	Feedback by reviewer	Ideas or requests for development opportunities	Objective for next year
			organisation to make sure she is better prepared in the future. This could also become a useful resource for new programme administrators.		

7. Other actions:

- Offer training to all line managers in Faculties and the School before the next SDPR round
- Continue to build resources on the wiki