



Questions and Answers

OxRSS provides Oxford research staff with a voice and networking oppor-

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR CAREER / PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

Chances are, your department has started, or is planning, a formal career / personal development review (CDR / PDR) scheme for research staff. CDR is simply what many effective PIs do naturally: they listen to their staff, they find out what's going right and wrong, and they try to help keep things going smoothly, whether that's through helping you to learn something new, by finding ways for you to explore a role you'd like to get into, or just saying, 'Thank you. Well done.' But even good PIs forget, and not every PI is a good manager. Few, if any, became a PI because they wanted to manage; many wanted to do research at a very high level, so being an effective manager is something they may well be learning, just as you are continually learning in your research role. Having a PDR system provides a framework for PIs to help them manage staff, and to help them give you the support you need, but bear in mind that CDR may be as new to them as it is to you.

CDR can be particularly useful to research staff because many are on fixed-term contracts and need to compete in a tough market for jobs. Whether you want to stay as a researcher in academia, move into industry, or move into teaching, it is vital you look at the broad range of skills you will need in order to succeed.

Put simply, CDR ensures that important conversations take place about work, about you, and about any areas where you need support, or development or where you have good ideas on how to do things better. The CDR meeting is a review point: a time to sum up the year gone and look forward to the year



ahead, and a chance to plan and prioritize. Your performance will come into it, but in a way that sums it up over the year, highlighting strengths and identifying areas that need strengthening. You should receive a CDR preparation form in advance of the meeting; you could also consider using Vitae's Researcher Development Framework to think about areas you want to focus on.

CDR can easily become a box-ticking exercise. But take the time to prepare and it can be a very useful space to step back and think about what you want and where you're heading. Overall, CDR is for you – so make the most of it!

If you're not sure whether you are eligible for a CDR, speak to your Departmental Administrator. All researchers in MPLS and Medical Sciences divisions should be in departments where CDR schemes are in place.

This article is based on the Guidance for PDR:

<https://pod.admin.ox.ac.uk/pdr>