



Professional Growth Policy

Prepared by:	WHMAT Working Group
Applies to:	All WHMAT colleagues (excluding NQTs)
Approved by:	Board of Trustees on 25th June 2020 after consultation with WHMAT's JNCC & MAT-wide colleagues
Issued to WHMAT academies for use:	3rd July 2020
Review date:	12 months from approval by Board
Links to:	Career Development Pledges Pay Policy Teachers' Standards Teaching Assistant Standards Professional Growth Toolkit
Version:	V7 29.06.2020

Contents	Page No
1.0 Introduction	3
2.0 Scope	4
3.0 Key Principles	4
4.0 Starting the Professional Growth Process - Self-Reflection	6
5.0 Setting Performance Expectations & Professional Growth Plan	7
6.0 Check-In Meetings	8
7.0 Professional Support/CPD/Career Development Pledges	9
8.0 Upper Pay Range (UPR) (Teaching colleagues only)	10
9.0 Core Team Executive Team members & senior leaders	11
10.0 Link to WHMAT's Capability Procedure	11
11.0 Policy Review & Storage of Paperwork	12
Appendix A – Professional Growth Time Line	13
Appendix B – Teaching Assistant Standards	14

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Washwood Heath Multi Academy Trust's ("WHMAT's) professional growth policy and process has been designed to:
 - 1.1.1 enable colleagues to reach their full potential, to grow professionally and to perform to the best of their ability so that they have a positive impact on school improvement and student education; and
 - 1.1.2 help colleagues feel happy, engaged and motivated in the workplace, so that they are also investing what is known as "discretionary effort" (otherwise known as "going the extra mile") on a regular basis; and
 - 1.1.3 help create a culture of "positive colleague well-being and continuous professional development" so that colleagues are proud to work for WHMAT;
- 1.2 This approach means moving away from a traditional appraisal process limited to 2 appraisal meetings with a start and finish date and, instead, towards a process focussing on:
 - 1.2.1 colleagues carrying out "self-reflection" at the start of the year to help focus their key expectations;
 - 1.2.2 colleagues having joint ownership of their performance expectations which are set out in their own "professional growth plan";
 - 1.2.3 regular check-ins between appraisee and their appraiser;
 - 1.2.4 empowering all appraisers to coach and support colleagues to become the very best versions of themselves at work;
 - 1.2.5 the opportunity (but not the expectation beyond the 'check ins' described below) for appraisees to reflect in an ongoing way, in dialogue with their appraiser through our online system Metamorphosis;
- 1.3 WHMAT's Professional Growth policy is underpinned by a range of resources to help support appraisers and their colleagues administer the process and should be read alongside the Career Pledges for teachers and support staff (see online system Metamorphosis).
- 1.4 In this policy, "professional growth" and "performance development" mean the same thing.
- 1.5 This Policy does not form part of a colleague's contract of employment and may be amended subject to consultation with WHMAT colleagues and with the recognised trade unions. However, all colleagues are expected to participate in the Professional Growth process and to comply with this Policy, unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- 1.6 In this policy, reference to a "nominated officer" may, depending on the circumstances and the relevant Scheme of Delegation mean, the CEO, the Deputy CEO,

the Acting Executive Head, the Head of Academy/Heads of School, Core team functional Directors or Appraisers.

2.0 Scope

2.1 This Policy applies to all WHMAT colleagues (including core team) but excludes:

2.1.1 Agency workers;

2.1.2 Colleagues on contracts of employment lasting less than 1 term;

2.1.3 Those undergoing a separate recognised induction programme (i.e. Newly Qualified Teachers (“NQTs) or those undertaking the “Assessment only” route).

2.2 Where a colleague is not covered by this Policy as per 2.1, their performance should still be managed through regular check-ins and feedback.

3.0 Key Principles

3.1 Professional Growth is the joint responsibility of colleagues and of their appraisers. It applies to all colleagues except for those at 2.1 above.

3.2 Professional Growth aims to build and enhance expertise and secure continuous growth and improvement. The focus is on each WHMAT colleague “*getting better*”. It is about each colleague, regardless of grade or role, “*improving – not proving*”.

3.3 Professional Growth is underpinned by regular self-reflection (see 4.0 below), joint ownership of “performance expectations” (aka objectives) between appraiser and appraisee (see 5.0 below), regular coaching conversations called ‘check-ins’ (see paragraph 6 below) and regular ongoing feedback (see 7.0 below).

3.4 With effect from 1st September 2020, the link between appraisal/professional growth and pay progression no longer exists.

3.5 The payment of increments within WHMAT (see Pay policy at www.whmat.academy policies tab) will be automatic provided that colleagues are:

3.5.1 performing at an acceptably good standard; colleagues who are on formal Performance Improvement Plans (PIPs) will be denied an increment whereas colleagues on informal PIPs may be denied an increment depending on the individual circumstances. Heads and appropriate senior managers should consult the People Matters team before reaching a conclusion on this matter;

3.5.2 engaging with the Professional Growth process and adhering to WHMAT's Code of Conduct (see www.whmat.academy policies tab); other than in this regard, there is no link between Professional Growth expectations and pay.

3.6 The purpose of Professional Growth is primarily to help colleagues to perform to the best of their ability and to be on a continual learning journey of their own. It is therefore assumed, unless evidence suggests otherwise, that WHMAT colleagues are meeting:

- i) For teachers, the Teachers' Standards ;
- ii) For teaching assistants, the Teaching Assistant standards set out in Appendix B;
- iii) For all other colleagues, key competencies set out in their job descriptions and/or person specifications.

If this is the case, and if they have not reached the top of their scale, they will automatically progress up the pay scale annually (except for UPR applications, which follow a different process – see paragraph 8). If and when available, progression should be seen as the norm. Pay decisions, including any decision not to award an increment on the basis of performance, will be made by the Head of Academy (or CEO for core team colleagues) prior to the Professional Growth process beginning as they are separate processes.

3.7 Professional growth will be a supportive and developmental process designed to ensure that all colleagues have the skills and support they need to carry out their role effectively. It is intended to encourage ongoing professional dialogue between appraiser and appraisee.

3.8 Colleagues should refer to the relevant WHMAT Career Pledge throughout the Professional Growth process.

3.9 Appraisers will usually be a colleague's direct line manager unless there are exceptional circumstances or to ensure only reasonable demands are placed on that line manager. This is because they should have the appropriate background knowledge, skills and training to undertake the role. Training will be made available to all WHMAT colleagues before the new approach is launched and to new appraisers thereafter.

3.10 The expectation is that all appraisers will receive training opportunities so that they may appraise their appraisees. If, however, an appraisee has an objection to the choice, they may submit a written request to the nominated officer for the appraiser to be replaced, stating the reasons for that request. The request will be seriously considered but if it is felt that there is not sufficient reason for the request, it will not be upheld and the reasons for this will be explained to the colleague in writing.

- 3.11 Whilst the Professional Growth period runs from 1st October to 30th September, the expectation is that the professional growth process will be continuous. In addition, all meetings will take place within directed time (teachers) and during contractual working hours (support staff), rather than during a lunch break and/or during PPA time (teachers).

4.0 Starting the Professional Growth Process - Self-Reflection

- 4.1 Professional Growth starts with effective self-reflection by all colleagues. Within WHMAT, for teachers, the Teachers' Standards form the benchmark for self-reflection, review and evaluation (see document available on the online system Metamorphosis). Likewise, Teaching Assistants will use the relevant standards (see online system Metamorphosis). Other colleagues will be expected to reflect against the requirements and competencies set out in their job descriptions or created by functional Core Team Directors. Colleagues will also want to reflect on the strategic objectives of their team or department, academy and/or WHMAT, the feedback they have received in the previous year and their own development needs.
- 4.2 By mid-October each year, all colleagues will complete the self-reflection form available on Metamorphosis and upload it to their area on that system. This will enable them to identify a) successes; b) strengths and c) areas for further growth. Whether reflecting against national standards or a job description or person specification, no rag-rating is required but each colleague should reflect on how well they are doing against each standard/point/competency, and reflect on what they might do next to become even better. This can be used to create "performance expectations" (aka objectives) before the first check-in and a "Professional Growth Plan". The focus areas will then be discussed with the support of the colleague's appraiser (see further at 5.0 below).
- 4.3 Where a colleague starts their employment part-way through an academic year, the nominated appraiser shall, in discussion with the colleague, ensure that they complete their self-reflection within 2 working weeks of starting and the first check-in and setting of performance expectations should take place by week 4 unless there are exceptional circumstances. The appraiser should then ensure that the Professional Growth cycle is brought into line with that of other colleagues as soon as possible.
- 4.4 Where a colleague transfers to a new post part-way through a cycle, the original appraiser should carry out a check-in before they start the new post so that feedback is as complete and/or up to date as possible. It may be, however, that there is a change of appraiser or that performance expectations need amending to reflect the change in role. These should be agreed jointly between the parties.

5.0 Setting Performance Expectations & Professional Growth Plan

- 5.1 The next stage of the Professional Growth Policy involves colleagues setting performance expectations within their unique “Professional Growth Plan”. These are the goals that will help focus a colleague’s development areas/priorities and stretch them to make significant achievements. This will take place in a meeting in October.
- 5.2 Performance expectations are set within the WHMAT online system (Metamorphosis) and colleagues are required to state a) the detail of the expectations, b) what success looks like and c) the proposed date for completion.
- 5.3 Performance expectations are subject to agreement by the appraiser but appraisees ultimately own their own performance expectations. If, however, there are concerns over performance, it should be expected that taking steps to address these concerns will be reflected in the performance expectations which are finally agreed. Performance expectations should only be submitted by the appraisee on Metamorphosis when they have emailed confirmation of their appraiser’s agreement.
- 5.4 As it is appreciated that autonomy for colleagues to shape their performance expectations can be a powerful motivator, rather than being told what they must achieve, performance expectations should be proposed by the colleague and based on their self-reflection and priorities identified. This will allow colleagues to take control of their own professional development. These will then be discussed and agreed with their appraiser at the first Check-In Meeting (see paragraph 6 below). They should be discussed in relation to the objectives of the colleague’s department, team, academy and/or the wider MAT.
- 5.5 Performance expectations can be either a target that is to be achieved, something that a colleague will deliver or be related to a standard of delivery. Teachers should use their professional judgement to think about what actions and efforts they will make which contribute towards helping pupils achieve. Support Staff should base these on team or departmental priorities and/or areas that colleagues have identified a desire to build on from their self-reflection and review of their job descriptions. All colleagues must set expectations to help them improve how they perform their role and so contribute to WHMAT’s core aim: the well-being and success of our pupils. There may be a focus on what to change or develop with intended impact. It is recommended that colleagues review their expectations at the start of each academic year to ensure they are aligned with a) School Improvement Plans, and/or Team/Departmental/Faculty/Phase Improvement Plans. No more than 3 performance expectations are recommended. Teaching colleagues on UPR and support staff on Grade 6 or above should set an expectation that reflects an impact on a wider academy/trust basis.

- 5.6 Sometimes priorities can change and/or colleagues can change roles part way through an academic year, therefore colleagues should amend performance expectations accordingly during a check-in, so that there are realistic and appropriate opportunities for colleagues to grow professionally.
- 5.7 Performance Expectations can be amended or withdrawn by mutual agreement at any time to ensure appropriateness to an individual's context.
- 5.8 The intention is that colleagues reflect on and refer to their Professional Growth Plan frequently, and that it forms the basis of continuous professional growth. The online system allows for the continuous addition of reflections, feedback, celebrations and evidence via the Professional Growth Diary. If colleagues wish to change their Professional Expectations, a new plan should be submitted on Metamorphosis.
- 5.9 Colleagues who start employment part way through an academic year or who are part-time should agree a pro-rated and realistic amount of performance expectations.
- 5.10 The appraiser will consider the effects of an individual's circumstances, including a disability, when agreeing performance expectations. For example, this might include a reasonable adjustment to allow an individual slightly longer to complete a performance expectation than might otherwise be the case. When colleagues return from a period of extended absence, performance expectations may be adjusted to allow the colleague to readjust to their working environment.

6.0 Check-In Meetings

- 6.1 A check-in meeting or "check-in" is a 1-2-1 meeting between a colleague and their appraiser to set and review performance expectations (including their individual Professional Growth Plan), to discuss priorities and to provide any appropriate support and development that has been discussed and agreed to help them achieve their expectations.
- 6.2 Check-in meetings are obligatory for all colleagues but colleagues should take personal responsibility for the areas that they wish to focus on. Typically, check-ins will last about 30 minutes.
- 6.3 The frequency of meetings is agreed with their appraiser but should be at least 3 during the academic year: one in the autumn term to approve performance objectives and where appropriate, to close down last years' cycle'; one in the spring term and one in the summer term. The check-ins are a 2-way opportunity for appraisees and appraisers to discuss the performance expectations, to get feedback or coaching on work matters or to discuss internal and external CPD. In some cases, e.g. if informal support is needed (see further at 3.1 of WHMAT's Capability Procedure), or the appraiser or colleague perceives this to be beneficial, colleagues may want to agree more regular meetings if there are particular challenges or expectations the appraisee wants to achieve that require regular discussion and support.

- 6.4 It is the appraiser's responsibility to arrange the meetings and to reschedule them within a timely fashion if necessary. Colleagues should also recognise that they are the ultimate owner of their Professional Growth Plans and need to engage fully with this process by following this up with their appraiser if this rescheduling is not carried out.
- 6.5 Preparing for a check-in meeting requires the reviewing of performance expectations and feedback so that a productive conversation about the Professional Growth Plan can be held.
- 6.6 Unlike traditional appraisals there are no lengthy forms to complete. The date of the check-in meeting should be recorded in our 'on-line' system, Metamorphosis, (along with any actions that are agreed to help achieve the set expectations) by the appraisee and finally any notes added to the Professional Growth Diary. The purpose of the meeting is to have a coaching conversation and to use the "Growth Diary" section of the plan to track the key points to help guide progress in line with the Professional Growth Plan.
- 6.7 To help facilitate the check-in meeting, colleagues should review their performance expectations, together with the online feedback they have received beforehand. If for any reason the appraisee has not uploaded this before the check-in, the appraiser will discuss it during the check-in and update the online system at the time. Appraiser and appraisee must record any agreed progress or actions/next steps during the check-in meeting via the Professional Growth Diary on the online system (Metamorphosis).
- 6.8 Every check-in meeting follows a set format to ensure that everything is covered including a wellbeing check (see online system).

7.0 Professional Support/CPD/Career Development Pledges

- 7.1 To ensure that Professional Growth is continuous, all colleagues are expected to read WHMAT's Career Pledge (available on Metamorphosis) insofar as it is relevant to their career stage and to consider what opportunities are available for them or to take responsibility for improving themselves by seeking out professional support opportunities. A colleague's ideas for CPD/professional support should be recorded in their online Professional Growth Plan.
- 7.2 Professional Support can take many forms – mentoring, coaching, co-planning, shadowing, networking, researching and/or taking up internal and/or external training opportunities, feedback and observations/learning walks.
- 7.3 WHMAT recognises that providing colleagues with feedback on how they are doing against their performance expectations increases the chances of these being reached. Any feedback should therefore focus on the agreed development area and should be provided as soon as possible after any support has taken place.
- 7.4 WHMAT recognises that for teachers, teaching assistants and cover supervisors, lesson observation is most productive for those observing and being observed, when used as a developmental tool that helps them identify strengths and developmental

goals. They should lead to discussions and self-reflection which are essential to professional growth. For teachers and, where appropriate teaching assistants, professional growth conversations will want to draw on a range of evidence depending on the nature of the expectations set at the start of the process. These may include lesson observation and the evidence provided by student outcomes and student work. It could also include evidence of wider involvement in the life of a colleague's academy and/or WHMAT and, where appropriate, leadership impact.

- 7.5 All colleagues are expected to support and learn from colleagues. Teaching colleagues, during the course of the year, are expected to observe a colleague with the sole focus of going to learn from them, with time provided for this. This visit will enable the identification of possible next steps in their development based on the learning gained from that colleague. Those with responsibility for curriculum development will also use the professional support, including classroom observations, as a means of evaluating curriculum design and implementation.

8.0 Upper Pay Range (UPR) (Teaching colleagues only)

- 8.1 UPR is a salary range available to qualified teachers who have been assessed as being eligible to be paid at this level. Moving on to UPR from main-scale is often referred to as "crossing the threshold".
- 8.2 To be considered for this; teachers must complete and submit a business case by October half term each year and submit it to hroperations@whmat.academy, copying in their head of academy. In a business case, teachers must show that:
- 8.2.1 They are highly competent in all aspects of the teachers' standards and have an extensive knowledge and understanding of how to use and adapt a range of teaching, learning and behaviour management strategies;
 - 8.2.2 They have fully engaged in the process of Professional Growth leading to an extensive knowledge of curriculum, assessment and pedagogical developments within their relevant phase or subject;
 - 8.2.3 Their achievements and contribution to their academy have been "substantial" and "sustained". "Sustained" means 2 years or more working at this level. "Substantial" means evidence of undertaking professional duties which make a wider contribution to the academy. This will often involve working beyond their own classroom and possibly their academy to guide the professional growth of other teachers. This could include evidence of activities such as: a) the sharing of good practice; b) mentoring and coaching others; c) providing demonstration lessons for less experienced colleagues; and d) promoting collaboration and effective team work.

Maintaining the UPR Standard

- 8.3 Once a WHMAT colleague has moved on to UPR, they are responsible for maintaining this standard. Individual academies will provide the support UPR colleagues need to

be able to continue to make a substantial and sustained contribution to their academy.

8.4 Progression within UPR will be automatic unless there are concerns around performance. However, teachers will need to continue to:

8.4.1 fully meet the teachers' standards;

8.4.2 engage with this professional growth process and the teachers' career pledge; and

8.4.3 maintain a substantial and wider contribution to their academy

8.5 Further details of progression to and within UPR can be found in WHMAT's Pay Policy at www.whmat.academy policies tab.

9.0 Core Team Executive Team members & senior leaders

9.1 The Professional Growth process for the CEO, Deputy CEO and Heads of Academy/Heads of School will be carried out by an external school improvement partner (SIP) who is suitably qualified.

9.2 Other members of the Core Team Executive (including functional directors) will have their Professional Growth process carried out by either the CEO or Deputy CEO.

9.3 360 reviews may be carried out for members of the Core Team (including Executive and Directors) and/or other senior leaders as a development tool.

9.4 This policy applies to all who lead academies and the Core Team Executive. The quality assurance of their work and the agreeing of their professional expectations will be facilitated by an external consultant appointed by WHMAT's Board of Trustees. While the priorities of their academy/WHMAT will influence the detail of these goals, there will be a focus on areas decided upon by the Board, but which are likely to include:

9.4.1 Culture and ethos; including staff well-being;

9.4.2 Safeguarding and personal development of students;

9.4.3 Leadership development (of self and others);

9.4.4 Quality of education, as reflected in teaching and learning, curriculum and student outcomes.

9.4.5 Strategic planning and impact at different levels (academy, WHMAT, system leadership and beyond as appropriate).

10.0 Link to WHMAT's Capability Procedure

10.1 Professional Growth is a proactive way to ensure that everyone's performance is to the best of their ability. It's therefore our aim to use Professional Growth to reduce the need for more formal capability procedures.

10.2 With that in mind, appraisers may be transitioned to the informal stage of the capability policy if performance issues are not satisfactorily resolved at check-in meetings. For further details, please see www.whmat.academy policies tab.

11.0 Policy Review & Storage of Paperwork

11.1 This Policy will be reviewed every 24 months by a WHMAT Working Group, in consultation with recognised unions, to ensure that it is working effectively and that it is complying with employment legislation and good practice. There is also a commitment to monitor the workload impact of the policy through regular professional dialogue and feedback from appraisers and appraisees.

11.2 WHMAT is hopeful that this Policy will be managed via an online system to avoid the use of unnecessary paperwork. However, any relevant paperwork should be filed confidentially in a secure place for up to 6 years and destroyed securely in line with WHMAT's Retention of Records Policy, see www.whmat.academy policies tab.

Appendix A – Professional Growth Time Line

DATE	EVENT	RESPONSIBILITY
Mid-September 2020	Directed time for colleagues/appraisees to prepare self-reflection document ahead of 1 st check-in & to schedule at least 2 check-ins with appraisees for forthcoming year	CEO/Heads & appraisees
October 2020	MAT training day used for all colleagues to close down 19/20 appraisal & have first check-in with appraisers to finalise performance expectations & growth diary for new cycle	All colleagues
Spring term	Appraisee adds to Professional Growth diary online before 2nd check-in this term – to take place by February half term	Appraisees
Summer term	Appraisee adds to Professional Growth diary online before 3 rd check-in this term	Appraisee
Mid-September 2021	Deadline for appraisers to have closed down cycle & made recommendations to Heads or CEO/DCEO (Core team)	Appraisers/Heads/CEO

Appendix B – Teaching Assistant Standards

Personal and professional conduct

Teaching assistants should uphold public trust in the education profession by:

- Having proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they work as professional members of staff.
- Demonstrating positive attitudes, values and behaviours to develop and sustain effective relationships with the school community.
- Having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being by following relevant statutory guidance along with school policies and practice.

- Upholding values consistent with those required from teachers by respecting individual differences and cultural diversity.
- Committing to improve their own practice through self-evaluation and awareness.

Knowledge and understanding

Teaching assistants are expected to:

- Share responsibility for ensuring that their own knowledge and understanding is relevant and up to date by reflecting on their own practice, liaising with school leaders, and identifying relevant professional development to improve personal effectiveness.
- Take opportunities to acquire the appropriate skills, qualifications, and/or experience required for the teaching assistant role, with support from the school/employer.
- Demonstrate expertise and skills in understanding the needs of all pupils (including specialist expertise as appropriate) and know how to contribute effectively to the adaptation and delivery of support to meet individual needs.
- Demonstrate a level of subject and curriculum knowledge relevant to their role and apply this effectively in supporting teachers and pupils.
- Understand their roles and responsibilities within the classroom and whole school context recognising that these may extend beyond a direct support role.

Teaching and learning

Teaching assistants are expected to:

- Demonstrate an informed and efficient approach to teaching and learning by adopting relevant strategies to support the work of the teacher and increase achievement of all pupils including, where appropriate, those with special educational needs and disabilities.
- Promote, support and facilitate inclusion by encouraging participation of all pupils in learning and extracurricular activities.
- Use effective behaviour management strategies consistently in line with the school's policy and procedures.
- Contribute to effective assessment and planning by supporting the monitoring, recording and reporting of pupil performance and progress as appropriate to the level of the role.
- Communicate effectively and sensitively with pupils to adapt to their needs and support their learning.
- Maintain a stimulating and safe learning environment by organising and managing physical teaching space and resources.

Working with others

Teaching assistants are expected to:

- Recognise and respect the role and contribution of other professionals, parents and carers by liaising effectively and working in partnership with them.
- With the class teacher, keep other professionals accurately informed of performance and progress or concerns they may have about the pupils they work with.
- Understand their responsibility to share knowledge to inform planning and decision making.

- Understand their role in order to be able to work collaboratively with classroom teachers and other colleagues, including specialist advisory teachers.
- Communicate their knowledge and understanding of pupils to other school staff and education, health and social care professionals, so that informed decision making can take place on intervention and provision.