How job planning links with appraisal

Introduction

Increasingly, there is a need to understand the links between job planning and appraisal. The linkage is one that concerns time, inputs, outputs and people. This section looks at how the two are related, and offers some suggestions as to how to maximise the opportunities afforded by both. Individual organisations will differ in the way that they link these activities and it is possible, also, that different directorates within an organisation may take differing approaches.

The timing of appraisal and job planning

Each trust must determine this. It is best to consider the two processes as a continuous cycle, one feeding into the other. Therefore, it is almost certain that the phase of the Trust’s business cycle will determine the absolute start point. Thereafter, the cycle continues on at least a yearly basis. Consideration needs to be given to the link of job plan reviews with consultants’ threshold decisions (see section on ‘dealing with pay progression’).

Appraisal and job planning can happen at the same time, conducted by the same person. Alternately, the two processes can be distinct in time and personnel. Naturally, there is the middle ground of separation in time but conducted by the same person. How each trust approaches the process depends on a number of issues. The purpose of this section is to give some signposts and thoughts that should stimulate ideas and discussion within directorates and Trusts. There is not one answer to fit all situations. This is true when comparing Trusts or directorates within Trusts. Local factors will determine the outcome, however there should be sufficient flexibility to enable different systems in different directorates, where appropriate.

The purpose of job planning

Job planning is a systematic activity designed to produce clarity of expectation for employer and employee about the use of time and resources to meet individual and service objectives. It is prospective in nature.

The purpose of appraisal

Appraisal is a systematic approach to review a consultant’s achievements, consider their continuing progress and to identify developmental needs. For NHS consultants, it is also a prime form of evidence required for licensing and revalidation purposes. It tends to be retrospective in nature.

The consultant appraisal scheme is both summative and formative. There are three broad objectives, however.

- To optimise the skills and knowledge required to maintain and improve performance – the professional development needs of the consultant
- To consider changes or developments in the fields in which the consultant wishes to participate – the personal development needs of the consultant
- To provide adequate evidence to allow, if appropriate, revalidation by the General Medical Council (GMC).
Differences between job planning and appraisal

There are common elements between these two processes. It is probable that much of the information required will be duplicated. The most obvious are activity levels and quality of outcomes. There are, however, key differences between the two processes that may be a driver to keep them apart. Careful consideration and planning can overcome these differences allowing the two meetings to run at the same time. These differences are summarised in the table below.

The common element - objectives

It is clear, therefore, that when considering objectives during the job planning session, their origin and value have to be certain, as does their ability to be met by factors within the control of the consultant. The objectives considered during job planning derive from two main sources, namely the corporate/directorate agenda and the personal development plan. The former objectives are about service provision, the latter about personal achievement. These latter objectives arise during the appraisal meeting and are of two types - either the maintenance or improvement of current skills or the development of new skills.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Driver</th>
<th>Job planning</th>
<th>Appraisal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Present at meeting</td>
<td>Consultant, clinical lead, +/- general manager</td>
<td>Consultant and appraiser (must be registered and validated doctor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis</td>
<td>Service delivery and patient care</td>
<td>Personal &amp; professional standards and development framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Framework</td>
<td>Consultant job planning - standards of best practice (DH guidance)</td>
<td>GMC revalidation requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atmosphere, ethos</td>
<td>Businesslike</td>
<td>Developmental, supportive, creative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measure</td>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>Quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard benchmark</td>
<td>Commitments and duties to employer</td>
<td>Professional standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome</td>
<td>Timetable and agreed service/patient objectives</td>
<td>PDP – skills to deliver care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits</td>
<td>Meet pay progression criteria</td>
<td>GMC revalidation</td>
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The continuous cycle

In summary, job planning and appraisal processes should be viewed as a continuous cycle, as supported by the following points:

1. There are no rules about the order in which Trusts should carry out their appraisals and job plan reviews.

2. Appraisal is necessary for GMC revalidation purposes and provides an opportunity for individuals to develop their personal development plans and personal objectives.

3. Job plan reviews are necessary for determining how organisational and service requirements are to be delivered and how the requirements necessary for the achievement of personal objectives are agreed. A successful job plan review is also necessary for pay progression purposes.

4. One outcome of the appraisal process is a personal development plan. It might therefore be sensible for appraisal to precede job planning. The personal development plan should then be forward to the individual conducting the job plan meeting.

5. Clearly, there is no single correct way to schedule the two events. They can take place simultaneously or at different times. There is also no single correct way to determine who holds the meetings with the consultant. However, current guidance is that the appraisal meeting involves a suitably trained clinician and a consultant; the job planning meeting involves a clinical manager and a consultant.

6. It is clear that there is a significant overlap of documentation for these two events and Trusts should bear this in mind when they design their own schedule.

7. Remember that if there is a significant change in any aspect of the job plan during the year it might be necessary to have an interim job plan review.

Fig 4
Job planning and appraisal cycle