

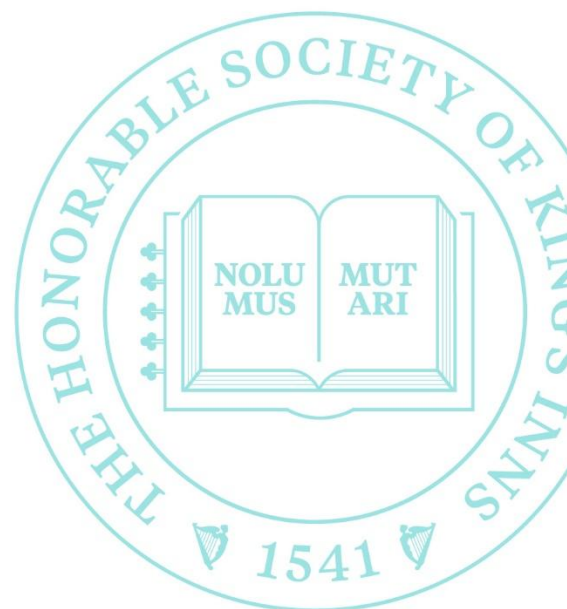
KING'S INNS

Staff Communication and Development Policy

Responsible staff member:	CEO	
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1. Introduction

The Honorable Society of King's Inns (King's Inns) values all staff and recognises that their skills, knowledge and personal commitment underpins the success of King's Inns.

King's Inns recognises the importance of staff communication and staff development and is committed to:

- Ensuring open communication with and between all staff members
- Facilitating and developing the potential of each member of staff
- Supporting staff to undertake personal and professional development that ensures that every staff member has the competencies – knowledge, skills, and behaviours - for their current role and to create a positive and inclusive working environment
- Building individual and organisational capability, and
- Meeting the learning and development needs identified through 1 to 1 conversations and feedback.

King's Inns is in the enviable position of having access to a range of experts across all aspects of the law, through the membership base of the Society and our proximity to the Bar of Ireland and the courts. To maximise the availability of this expertise King's Inns recruits a wide panel of part-time lecturers and tutors to teach on its courses. The panel of part-time lecturers and tutors is comprised of barristers in full-time practice at the Bar, with guest speakers from other backgrounds relevant to the course they are delivering (e.g. medical experts, accountants, solicitors). King's Inns also has a core team of permanent part-time and full-time staff.

2. Purpose of Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for communication and the professional development of staff in King's Inns. The aim is that through using effective communication, and personal and professional development, both the individual and King's Inns performance is enhanced. The policy identifies elements where provision for part-time lecturers and tutors differs from that provided for permanent staff.

3. Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all staff at King's Inns.

The Staff Development Scheme is not available to part-time/occasional lecturers or tutor panel members teaching in discrete specialist areas. The relevant Coordinator will address any issues that arise directly with the individual.

4. Policy Statement

4.1 Staff Communication

King's Inns recognises that good communication takes many different forms, whether that be written, face to face, through behaviour and actions, in large or small group settings, 1 to 1, and formal or informal interactions. Effective organisational communication needs to

move in all directions, up, down and peer to peer. King's Inns encourages and supports staff to express views, provide feedback, seek clarification and ask questions at all levels.

We believe that communication that is respectful, open and genuine leads to a positive working environment and a culture of learning and development.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and the Senior Management Team (SMT) meet every week. Individual Senior Managers provide an update on relevant developments in their area of responsibility.

Senior Managers hold regular team meetings with their team. Operational day to day matters, issues arising in delivery of services, and general queries are dealt with at each team meeting, with each member actively participating.

Project teams and staff committees are formed to progress specialist projects or organise events, for example: Health and Safety Committee, Conferring Ceremony, Academic Open Day.

The primary contact point for members of the academic teaching staff is the relevant Coordinator, followed by the Dean. Most communications to the academic teaching staff take place via email. Barrister-at-Law degree teaching panel members also attend regular pre-session meetings with the Coordinator responsible for the unit.

As the total administration team is less than 20 people, there are open lines of communication between managers and fellow staff members. Management can regularly be found at the staff members' desk assisting with work issues, handling customer queries, etc. All managers are fully accessible to staff and actively listen to concerns, questions or issues that arise. Staff are clear on the role and function of each of their colleagues and are encouraged to share advice and suggestions with each other.

We believe that good communication begins at recruitment and onboarding. Core staff are provided with the Staff Handbook together with their contract of employment, job description, and Data Protection Statement prior to commencing. The Staff Handbook includes information on emergency contacts, health and safety, staff development and training, and leave policies. Prior to the start date, the manager contacts the new employee to confirm their role, explain logistical matters such as gaining access to the building on the first day, canteen facilities, dress code, parking arrangements and to explain what the induction programme will entail.

All policies and procedures are stored on the shared drive accessible to all core staff, and HR policies are stored on HR Locker. Where there is a new or revised policy or procedure or the introduction of a new business process, this is communicated via email. A meeting with relevant staff is held to explain the rationale behind the policy /procedure and clarify any issues or concerns, as required.

Training and development opportunities for staff are communicated, via email, by the relevant manager. For example, Coordinators and academic teaching staff are notified of training and development opportunities by the Dean's office; members of each team are notified of such opportunities by their manager. Where staff identify appropriate opportunities, they should raise these with their manager.

Academic staff have the opportunity to relay their feedback on training needs during training needs surveys or directly to the relevant Coordinator or the Dean.

4.2 Staff Development Scheme

King's Inns strives to deliver high standards of performance and service at all times. As an organisation, we are very proud of what King's Inns has achieved and we aim to continue that quality of service and success long into the future. The success of King's Inns is based on the abilities and commitment of our staff and how they use their skills to respond to the changing needs of the institution. King's Inns want to ensure that the potential of every staff member is developed to meet the needs of their role and the needs of the organisation.

The Staff Development Scheme is designed to facilitate a two-way engagement between an individual member of staff and their manager on their role, their achievements and on areas that may require further development. King's Inns affirms the view that work satisfaction is enhanced when staff feel that their work performance is strong and when it is recognised.

To avoid any misunderstanding, the staff development scheme is not a pay review although, where pay increases are in contemplation in any fiscal period, performance appraisals since the last general pay-review will be considered.

At the outset of the Staff Development Scheme the staff member completes a Staff Development Review Form which is then provided to and discussed confidentially with their manager. This initial step is designed to foster and enhance performance of the individual member of staff and provides the basis for discussion of the individual's continuing professional development. It also provides an opportunity for an individual staff member to contribute their ideas to enhancing the services of King's Inns and to participate in the development of the future strategy of the organisation.

The Staff Development Scheme applies to all permanent full-time and permanent part-time staff only. The process is undertaken via an annual scheduled meeting between the member of staff and their manager.

The Staff Development Scheme is not available to part-time/occasional lecturers or tutor panel members teaching in discrete specialist areas. The relevant Coordinator will address any issues that arise directly with the individual.

The Staff Development Scheme involves:

- A review and recording of achievements and performance over the preceding year
- A discussion of priorities and establishment of targets for the next period. These targets will be appropriate to the individual's post/role
- Devising a professional development plan for individual and achievement of the targets
- Agreement on how the plan will be implemented.

On an annual basis, the staff member will be asked to complete a Staff Development Review Form setting out the main activities of their role and an assessment of their strengths and achievements during the period under review, against the priorities and targets that were agreed with for that period.

The manager, in a confidential discussion with the staff member, will provide appropriate feedback to affirm their achievements against those targets and agree a plan for professional development in the coming period. The agreed outcome of this discussion is then recorded and signed on the Staff Development Review Form.

A mid-year meeting between the staff member and their manager will take place to review the implementation of the plan, monitor its success and amend, if necessary.

The Staff Development Review Form is available to download from HR Locker. Each manager will schedule the annual and mid-year review meetings with their team members.

4.3 Training and Development

Training and development opportunities are available to all full-time and permanent part-time staff across King's Inns. King's Inns aims to ensure that all members of the staff are properly prepared for their role and given access to all the relevant job experiences.

Training is provided on the basis that it meets identified training and development needs and that it contributes to the strategic priorities of King's Inns.

King's Inns supports ongoing professional development of staff, within the constraints imposed by our annual budget and, to that end:

- An overall staff-training budget will be drawn up for each financial year
- Staff members will be given an opportunity to discuss their professional development needs through the mechanism of the Staff Development Scheme.

The manager through the Staff Development Scheme will facilitate each staff member to identify their training and development needs and identify mechanisms for the transfer of knowledge / skills gained in training to the King's Inns workplace. There are different types of activities that contribute to an individual's professional development and staff are encouraged to consider the range of opportunities available to them. Staff may also be required to undergo internal training that is identified as essential to ensure health, safety and welfare at King's Inns. Training and development activities organised by King's Inns will usually take place during work time. In the case of part-time employees, they will either attend training during paid working time or they will be paid an allowance for attending training.

In situations where King's Inns has person/s with the relevant skill/expertise staff training will be delivered internally. Where the appropriate skills/expertise has to be recruited externally training will be carried out once it is within the available budget.

Staff wishing to undertake an educational programme/course or attend a conference that involves support from King's Inns in the form of funding or leave arrangements (study or examinations) will complete the 'Application for Educational Assistance' form, available through HR Locker. Staff will normally have discussed the programme or course with their manager through the Staff Development Scheme. If supporting the application, the manager will sign the relevant application form. Any course should be mutually beneficial to the individual, the department/School and King's Inns.

All applications for funding support for courses, programmes or attendance at conferences will be presented to the SMT and funding will be based on the staff development budget for the year. In some cases, depending on the budget, approval may have to be deferred to the following year.

4.4 Staff Induction

The development of a new staff member begins at induction and continues through the probation period and the ongoing management of performance. King's Inns is committed to supporting new staff members and ensuring their transition into their role and the institution. Prior to taking up employment, the new staff member will meet with their manager who will make sure there is clarity around King's Inns procedures and the staff member's role and responsibilities.

All new employees will have an induction programme with their manager. The duration and content of the induction programme varies depending on the needs of the role. Induction normally takes place within the first week of employment at King's Inns. The new employee will be provided with a copy of the King's Inns Strategic Plan which outlines the organisation's mission, vision and values. They will learn about all aspects of working at King's Inns and they will have an opportunity to query any aspect not covered at the selection stage or in the employee's contract of employment. A checklist for staff induction will be provided.

New members of the academic teaching staff (with the exception of guest speakers or subject matter specialists) are provided with a tailored induction meeting with the relevant Coordinator at the beginning of the teaching term. This meeting will ideally be an in-person meeting. If this is not possible a Zoom meeting may be organised.

The agenda for the induction includes an overview of the following areas:

- Learner support services
- IT Services
- Library and information Services
- Quality Assurance policies and procedures
- Teaching, learning and assessment
- Tour of King's Inns, if not a graduate
- Introduction to the Dean
- Procedures for ongoing support – who to contact? use of digital tools? training for live on-line teaching?
- Procedures for feedback and input to continuous improvement at King's Inns.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

The CEO of King's Inns is the owner of this policy and will, with along with the SMT, oversee the implementation of this policy as required.

6. Monitoring and Review of Policy

The policy owner is responsible for monitoring implementation of the policy, ensuring that all associated documents are updated and current, and that the policy is reviewed as required.

The policy will be reviewed every three years from the date of first approval unless changes are required owing to legal, statutory and/or organisational change.

All policies and policy changes are approved by Council on the recommendation of Standing Committee.

7. Associated documents

- Staff Handbook
- [Staff Recruitment Policy](#)
- Staff Development Review Form
- Application for Educational Assistance
- Checklist for Induction