

The role of a line manager

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The term “line manager” relates to individuals who have members of staff or teams directly reporting to them and who have responsibility for them to a higher level of management.

Examples of typical responsibilities a line manager may carry out include:

- Day-to-day people management
- Managing operational costs
- Providing technical expertise
- Organisation of work allocation and rotas
- Monitoring work processes
- Checking quality
- Dealing with customers/clients
- Measuring operational performance

At Southampton, line managers are supported by HR to enable them to carry out specific people-related activities including:

- On-going performance management and undertaking performance appraisals
- Dealing with discipline and grievances
- Recruitment and selection
- Providing coaching and guidance
- Pastoral care

Line managers play a pivotal role in implementing and enabling Southampton’s people policies and practices, helping to bring them to life. They are the interface between the organisation and its workforce. They can influence work-life balance and encourage alignment with business objectives or core values. They can impact on employee engagement and the extent to which staff feel their contribution is recognised.

It is recognised that staff who feel positive about their relationship with their line managers are more likely to have higher levels of job satisfaction, commitment and loyalty. This in turn is associated with higher levels of performance or discretionary behaviour. This can be encouraged by line managers building effective teams, a good working relationship with staff, and by supporting individuals in taking more responsibility for how they do their jobs.

In addition, line managers themselves need to be managed within a strong supportive framework to enable them to develop as effective people managers. It is recognised that well-managed line managers are more likely to go on to lead high-performing teams.

The University is committed to developing the environment and culture in which line managers are actively encouraged and permitted to make a significant difference to people management practices. HR is committed to designing processes and providing advice and guidance that supports this.