














Performance Appraisal Handbook

For Civil Service Employees

Human Resources

Performance Appraisal

-  **Definition - 3**
-  **Uses - 3**
-  **Performance Standards - 4**
-  **Rating Definitions - 5**
-  **Performance Goals - 5**
-  **Rating Errors - 6**
-  **Rating Cycle - 7**
-  **The Performance Review - 8**
-  **Appraisal Process - 9**
-  **Evaluate the System - 11**
-  **Appraisal Checklist - 12**

Performance Appraisal Defined

Performance appraisal provides a periodic review and evaluation of an individual's job performance.

Although the appraisal forms may only be completed once a year, the job of performance appraisal is continuous - sometimes daily - and requires effective communication on both the part of the supervisor and the employee. The supervisor is ultimately responsible to make sure these conversations actually take place and are documented.

It is essential that the supervisor hold all performance discussions and documentation in complete confidence. One employee's performance should never be discussed with another employee. This action is one of the best ways for a supervisor to lose the trust of all employees.

The completed Performance Appraisal forms are maintained in the employee's personnel file in Human Resources and are released only to the employee, the supervisor or other persons authorized by law, regulation, or policy.

Uses

Performance appraisal has many uses, but perhaps the most important is that it provides employees with critical feedback with which they can improve their performance. Without your feedback, your employee may have a difficult time figuring out what you want done differently.

It also provides supervisors with critical feedback with which they can help employees improve their performance and often also provides supervisors with ideas on how they can become a better supervisor.

Training needs should be identified during performance discussions. If an employee is having trouble completing assignments, you should always investigate whether you have

provided the employee with all necessary training for the tasks. Just because other employees may not have needed additional training, doesn't mean none of them need training.

The University may use completed performance appraisals for many things, including: 1) determining the promotability of employees; 2) validating tests used for recruitment and selection; 3) evaluating the training program to find areas where additional training needs to be offered; and possibly 4) to determine merit pay when applicable. Employees who wish to have their performance appraisals reviewed by potential supervisors for consideration for a new position need to make sure Human Resources is aware of their wishes.

As an employee, you should use your performance to help you plan your career and assess strengths and weaknesses to identify potential job growth.

Since performance evaluations may also be used in legal disputes, it is essential that the information entered is truthful, accurate and based on performance, not personalities, rumors, or opinions.

The annual performance appraisal must NOT be the sole basis for initiating formal discipline. When employee performance requires correction, it is the supervisor's job to identify the problem, discuss it with the employee, and document the discussion as soon as the correction is identified. There should be no surprises during the annual discussion.

Performance Standards

Performance standards are what we use to differentiate between acceptable and unacceptable behavior. The standards are identified for each of the job elements and explain what satisfactory performance will look like. Written justification must be provided for any rating of "Outstanding," "Unacceptable," or "Needs Improvement." The employee should have been notified

well before the formal annual appraisal if they will be rated less than "Meets Expectations".

Ratings Definitions

Use the following as a general guide when determining your ratings for each item:

Unacceptable: A standard of performance well below minimum requirements; not effective

Needs Improvement: A standard of performance generally below acceptable standards; needs development

Meets Expectations: A standard of performance meeting all normal requirements of the position

Exceeds Expectations: A standard of performance generally exceeding expected results; above average

Outstanding: A standard of performance leaving no consequence to be desired; highest possible effectiveness

Performance Goals (SMART)

Performance goals must have certain characteristics in order to be effective. Goals must be

- S)** Specific
- M)** Measurable
- A)** Attainable
- R)** Relevant
- T)** Timely

Be sure goals and objectives are clearly connected to the department or University strategy or mission/vision.

Rating Errors

It is the supervisor's responsibility to ensure the Performance Appraisal accurately reflects the performance of the employee. Rating employees on their performance alone is not easy. Most raters (even the best) make many common mistakes. If you are going to have an effective rating system, you must avoid making any of the following rating errors:

1) **Halo/Horn** - allowing perceptions of performance on one rating dimension to affect the rating of all performance dimensions. An employee who has difficulty working with others may rate very high in dependability or job knowledge.

2) **Leniency/Severity** - Rating easy or harsh regardless of performance. This is usually done with employees we especially like or employees we may not like so much. Be sure to rate the performance, not how we feel personally about the person.

3) **Central Tendency** - Rating everyone average regardless of performance. This takes a lot of responsibility off the supervisor's shoulders as it is difficult for any one to complain since no one got either a very good or a very bad rating. It could also mean rating the same employee average in all behaviors or job elements.

4) **Contrast Effect** - comparing employees with one another. Remember that you rate each employee's performance against the job description—not how they compare with other employees, or how they compare with the last employee in that job.

5) **Primacy/Recency** - First impression and memory errors. We remember best what we see either first or last. This is a good reason to keep an event record/log. Using this method should eliminate this error along with several others mentioned above.

6) **Escalation of Commitment** - as familiarity increases commitment increases. Once we have made up our mind about an employee - good or bad - it is difficult to change our opinion. We look for good behavior in good employees and we look

for bad behavior in bad employees. We continue to look for and only see behavior that supports our opinion.

7) Self-fulfilling Prophecy - managers who hire employees usually want them to succeed. It is a good reflection on the manager. At the same time, managers may not expect success from an employee that someone else selected. It is also easy to put too much credence in what others have told you about an employee. We look for performance that supports our beliefs and disregard performance that is contrary to our beliefs.

8) Bias - value systems affect opinions. For example, it may be difficult to consider someone of a different religion or ethnic group as being a good person, and so it may be difficult to rate them as a good employee.

9) Stereotyping - If we consider a certain group of people as hard working then we may tend to rate anyone in that group as being highly productive even if they are not.

10) Glass Ceiling Effect - The supervisor may sometimes decide when an employee has reached their peak performance and stop challenging the employee to continue to improve.

Rating Cycle

The formal [Performance Appraisal Form](#) must be completed annually. At the beginning of the rating cycle, the supervisor and employee must review the blank form and identify which five, six, or seven Job Elements will be rated; which Position-Specific Factors will be rated; and identify goals or objectives to be completed during the rating cycle. For employees on probation, the supervisor must complete both the Midpoint and Final Employee Evaluation Records and return them to the Employment Office in Human Resources. When you complete these forms, take the opportunity to have a formal performance discussion with your new employee. Be sure the final form is turned in before the end of the probationary period.

Civil Service appraisals should be done on a periodic basis covering approximately 12 months. The beginning of the fiscal year is typically the beginning of the Civil Service Appraisal period for most employees. For new employees, the appraisal period may begin at the completion of probation or the date the employee is assigned. In these cases, the period might not be 12 months. Completed Appraisal forms are due to Human Resources within 30 days of the end of the rating cycle; generally at the end of the fiscal year.

The Performance Review

Get Ready

When getting ready to conduct a performance discussion, it is important that you allow sufficient time for your discussion. Remember to allow time for the employee to talk at least as much as you plan to. Schedule the discussion for a time and place where you will not be distracted by the phone or visitors and you both will not feel intimidated.

Get Set

Be sure to notify the employee ahead of time so they have ample time to complete the [Employee Worksheet](#) and think about what they will want to discuss. You should also make sure the employee has the most recent copy of the [Event Record/Log](#). Even though both forms are optional, they are great ways for both the supervisor and employee to document work experience that covers the Performance Appraisal period.

Go

When you are ready to conduct the discussion, be sure you spend more time listening than talking. Ask the employee for a variety of input, including: solutions for problems, what they think they can do to improve their own performance, and be sure to ask how you can help your employee improve.

Your employee needs feedback from you on how they are performing at their job. Just as you appreciate feedback from your supervisor -- so do your employees. Feedback is necessary for correcting errors. Individuals normally have an inherent drive to self-evaluate, which means they seek feedback as a basis for comparing themselves to others. Feedback also reduces uncertainty which is a cause of stress because they are not sure what you want from them. Consistent feedback reduces stress for both you and your employee.

Finally, review the appraisal forms including the Event Record/Log and the completed Employee Worksheet (hyperlinked above), and the Performance Appraisal Form. At the conclusion of the discussion, you can finalize the form and notify the employee when you are ready for them to sign it.

Appraisal Process

In the Beginning

At the beginning of the rating cycle you and your employee must reach an understanding of how the appraisal process is going to proceed. You should begin by reviewing the position description and determining which Position Specific Factors will be used to evaluate the employee. Although you need to discuss this information with the employee, you need to get their input and then make the final decision. You might want to select the area with the greatest percentage of time assessed to it, or you may want to select one that is very critical to the success of the employee. In any case, you should select the areas that you want the employee to concentrate on during the cycle because "what gets measured gets done."

You also need to determine which of the Job Elements will be rated. You may want to rate all of the elements or you may decide that up to two of the elements are not important for this job and

leave them out of the evaluation. Again, although you will discuss these factors with your employee, you must make the final decision.

The last thing you will need to do is determine and document goals for the employee. Once it is clear how the employee will be evaluated, you should both sign the form and you should give the employee a copy.

During the cycle

As the year progresses, you need to have regular contact with your employee so you can actually see for yourself what is going on and discuss it with the employee as needed. Make regular entries in the Event Record/Log (hyperlinked above) and discuss each entry with your employee. You should include both positive and negative events. Address any problems as they come up and take any necessary action to correct them. As you make entries in the log, be sure to provide a copy to the employee.

30 days and counting

About 30 days before you plan to conduct your annual appraisal discussion, meet with the employee and make sure they are aware of the scheduled meeting time and place, and have a copy of all documentation that is expected to be discussed during the formal performance appraisal. Give the employee a blank copy of the Employee Worksheet (hyperlinked above) and ask them to complete it and bring it with them to the meeting.

The Day has Come

On the day of the appraisal discussion, review all the forms together with the employee. You may use the Checklist at the end of this booklet as a guide for the discussion. Remember to review performance - not personalities. Discuss and document next year's goals, position specific factors and job elements before you are done with the meeting. If you have followed the steps up to now, addressed problems as they occur and discuss performance regularly with the employee, this meeting should be a smooth process.

When the Appraisal is Done

After your appraisal meeting you should formalize the form according to the discussion, 1) record the employee's signature on the form; 2) provide a copy to the employee; and 3) forward the original copy to your department director for signature and forwarding to Human Resources.

Evaluate the System

Now that you have completed a cycle, you should evaluate the system to be sure your employee understands the feedback and to see if there is a positive change in performance as a result of the appraisal.

Appraisal Interview Checklist

- ___ Did you discuss each goal or objective established?
- ___ Are you and the employee clear on the areas of agreement and disagreement?
- ___ Did you and the employee cover all positive skills, traits, accomplishments, areas of growth, etc.? Did you reinforce the employee's accomplishments?
- ___ Did you give the employee a sense of what you thought of his or her potential or ability?
- ___ Are you both clear on areas where improvement is required? Expected? Demanded? Desired?
- ___ What training or development recommendations did you agree on?
- ___ Did you indicate consequences for noncompliance, if appropriate?
- ___ Did you set objectives for the next appraisal period?
- ___ Did you set a time for the next performance discussion?
- ___ Did you confirm what your part would be? Did the employee confirm his or her part?
- ___ Did you thank your employee for his or her efforts?