



PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Supervisor's Manual

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March 2023

Table of Contents

Philosophy, Purpose, Goals and Objectives	3
Frequency of Performance Appraisal.....	4
Preparation for the Appraisal Conversation	4
Preparing the Performance Appraisal Form	5
Conducting the Appraisal Conversation.....	7
Setting Action Plan/Goals and Career Development Objectives.....	8
Completing the Final Appraisal Form.....	9
Performance Appraisal Records and Access	9

Philosophy, Purpose, Goals and Objectives

Performance management is an ongoing, continuous process of communicating and clarifying job responsibilities, priorities and performance expectations in order to ensure mutual understanding between supervisor and employee.

It is a philosophy which values and encourages employee development through a style of management which provides frequent feedback and fosters teamwork.

It emphasizes communication and focuses on adding value to the university by promoting improved job performance and encouraging skill development.

Performance Management involves clarifying the job duties, defining performance standards, documenting, evaluating, and discussing performance with each employee.

The primary purposes of performance management are to:

- Maximize the effectiveness of the people who work at the University.
- Help meet the goals and objectives of the University.
- Assist in creating a workplace environment which promotes the dignity and job satisfaction of the individual.

The appraisal process does so by providing individuals with periodic, standardized and objective evaluation of job performance.

The performance appraisal has the following objectives:

- Promoting open communication.
- Providing feedback to improve performance.
- Acknowledging positive performance.
- Reviewing/updating expectations of the position for current applicability.
- Identifying training needs and opportunities for personal and professional development.
- Developing information about individual performance which is pertinent to decisions regarding salary, promotion, and termination.
- Identifying issues which can be mutually addressed by employees and evaluators, providing positive solutions, and monitoring the results.
- Establishing goals and objectives to be attained before the next review period.

Frequency of Performance Appraisal

Performance appraisals for all staff employees are generally completed on an annual basis, on or near the employee's anniversary date of hire. For new staff, an initial performance appraisal should be completed upon the conclusion of the introductory period, which is generally the first three months of employment.

Supervisors may give appraisals outside of the regular schedule, if a need arises.

Preparation for the Appraisal Conversation

To encourage active participation in the appraisal process, both supervisor and employee can fill out draft performance appraisal forms and discuss these during a conversation, after which a final performance appraisal form is prepared by the supervisor.

The supervisor and employee should review and update (as needed) the employee's job description. Schedule an appointment with the employee for a conversation at a mutually convenient place and time. Based on the situation, consider having the conversation in a neutral setting. Recommended steps below.

1. Review the employee's job description and make any necessary updates.
2. Review any notes/documentation of the employee's accomplishments or outstanding performance (projects completed, workshops attended/given, new programs developed or implemented, commendations received).
3. Several weeks prior to the conversation, ask the employee to complete the performance appraisal form (self-appraisal), based on their current job description. The employee should complete a self-appraisal and send to their supervisor for the performance appraisal conversation.
4. A rating of "Meets Standard" is to be considered normal, and ratings of "Above Standard" or "Below Standard" should be explained on the form. "Meets Standard" *may* be explained. Comments are strongly encouraged as they provide the most helpful feedback to employees, and should be as specific as possible and stated in constructive terms.

Preparing the Performance Appraisal Form

The first thing to be done in an effective performance appraisal is to establish job duties and responsibilities and the performance expectations for each. It is important that an employee understand what these specific job duties and responsibilities are and the performance expectations for each aspect of the job. The job description forms the foundation and should be carefully reviewed to see if it needs updating when compared to an employee's actual job responsibilities. When completing each category of the form, use these general guidelines to improve efficiency as an evaluator.

1. **Appraise only the performance factors that are appropriate for the position in question.** Keep the appraisal focused on the work, not the worker. Relate performance factors to specific job responsibilities and duties as outlined in the job description.
2. **Base the appraisal on the typical performance of the employee during the entire period.** Be careful not to over-emphasize recent happenings or isolated dramatic incidents (both negative and positive) that are not typical of the employee's normal performance.
3. **DO NOT appraise too quickly.** Take enough time to appraise accurately.
4. **DO NOT make an appraisal on vague impressions.** To rate accurately, the supervisor must have accurate, specific knowledge of the employee's performance. Always stick to facts and refer to notes taken during the appraisal cycle.
5. **DO NOT permit level of position or length of service at PLU to affect the rating.** Consider only the performance of the employee in relation to the specific requirements of the job. Do not rate an employee too high just because the employee has a number of years of service but really only performs at an average rate.
6. **Neither allow personal feelings or prejudices to bias the appraisal, nor rate too sympathetically.** The evaluator must be constantly on guard against the normal inclination to attribute greater proficiency to employees well-liked personally or to employees because of sympathy. If there are special circumstances, appraise only on performance and explain the circumstances in the space provided under each factor. Additionally, keep in mind federal laws and PLU policies which prohibit employment discrimination.
7. **DO NOT let appraisal factors fall into a consistent or routine pattern.** There are usually wide differences in individuals within a department with respect to the various factors considered.

8. **DO NOT hesitate to go on record with a true appraisal.** A good evaluator should be able to differentiate between the performances of their employees. Remember that the “Meets Standard” rating is to be considered normal.
9. **Avoid rating on ambiguous qualities such as attitude, friendliness, consideration, etc.** Rate job performance rather than personality traits.

For example, rather than rating an employee on “cooperativeness,” an evaluator could evaluate the employee’s ability to make meaningful suggestions at staff meetings, to implement projects smoothly and efficiently, or to accept direction and constructive criticism willingly. Be sure to cite relevant examples.

Likewise, if an employee is “uncooperative,” an employer would evaluate the employee’s unwillingness to assist students in a timely manner or their inability to cooperate in group projects. Again, pertinent examples are necessary.

10. **Other Pitfalls To Avoid:**

HALO/HORN EFFECT: *The tendency to rate a person according to an impression (either favorable or unfavorable) of one factor of the person’s character or performance and to carry over this impression and rate the person the same way on all other factors.*

Example: Because an employee is a well organized and highly effective planner, excelling in both designing and implementing a program, the evaluator may tend to rate the staff member high in all categories.

Example: A staff member may be continually late to staff meetings thus requiring an update on what happened during their absence. Because this is such an annoyance, the evaluator may be tempted to give low ratings in other areas of the employee’s performance.

RECENCY/SPILOVER: *This is a tendency to let an employee’s most recent behavior or past behavior significantly influence a rating on current behavior.*

Example: Rating a staff member low at the end of a six-month rating period because they conducted a poor staff meeting the previous week is an example of a recency effect. Rating a staff member low for an absentee problem that occurred six months ago is an example of a spillover effect. Evaluators must make sure that the behavior is influencing the specific rating is representative of the staff member’s job behavior for the full rating period.

CONTRAST EFFECT: *The tendency for an evaluator to let another employee’s performance influence the ratings that are given to someone else. Look at*

individual skills, knowledge and abilities, rather than comparisons between employees.

Example: One employee is rated below standards simply because performance is obviously lower than another employee who is working far above standards.

Conducting the Appraisal Conversation

Probably the most important part of the entire appraisal process is the conversation. Appraisals that are constructive, have two-way communication, and are future-oriented can be great motivators. Providing a person with an opportunity to review their work performance objectively and exploring ways of strengthening that work performance are keys to a constructive appraisal.

Following are some “tips” to consider in completing a performance appraisal and conducting the conversation:

DO:

- Arrange with the staff member a convenient time and place for the appraisal conversation.
- If appropriate, begin with a few minutes of casual conversation to help create a relaxed atmosphere.
- Encourage two-way communication at the beginning of the conversation.
- Accentuate the positive. Express confidence in the person. Use strengths as the basis for improvements in marginal areas of performance.
- Be specific if there is a problem. Give concrete examples. Express appreciation for outstanding performance.
- Be open to changing a rating if the employee presents evidence that warrants doing so.
- Listen actively and be responsive to the employee. Don't sit behind a desk. Try to find a neutral, private area.

DON'T:

- Allow telephone calls or visitors to interrupt the session.
- Monopolize the conversation. Draw out employee and encourage them to speak.
- Allow the conversation to become confrontational or argumentative. If necessary, call a temporary recess or postponement.
- Surprise the employee with contents of the performance appraisal. **If the employee is surprised, there is a communication problem.** Day to day, ongoing dialogue should provide the employee with information on how well they are doing.
- Discuss other employees' performance during the conversation.

Setting Action Plan/Goals and Career Development Objectives

An employee's job description does not cover some of the special projects undertaken or address all of the specific duties performed. Therefore, it is important that the supervisor and employee work together to specify additional performance goals and career development objectives; including solutions, methods of measurement, and time lines for implementation. Well-written goals and career development objectives meet the following criteria:

- **SPECIFIC** - Spells out the who, what, when, where, and how of the desired level of performance. The expected standard of performance should be put in writing.
- **PERTINENT** - Clearly related to the job performance.
- **ATTAINABLE** - It should be possible to perform at the level of the agreed-upon expectation.
- **MEASURABLE** - What will be measured is whether or not the desired level of performance has been achieved. Measures usually involve one or more of the following: quantity, quality, time, etc.
- **OBSERVABLE** - The performance or result of the performance will be easily recognized.
- **SUPPORTED** - If additional training, workshop participation, or other needed support is necessary to attain the goal, it has been requested or somehow communicated between the supervisor and employee.

Completing the Final Appraisal Form

1. After the conversation, the supervisor will complete the final performance appraisal and provide it to the employee for review and signature. The employee's signature indicates only that they have participated in the process and received a copy of the final appraisal. After the form is signed by the employee, the original is forwarded to the supervisor of the supervisor. The fully signed appraisal is sent to Human Resources for the employee's personnel file.
2. Employees have the option to comment upon the final appraisal in writing. The employee may request a five-day period to prepare a written response to the final appraisal.
3. The supervisor of the supervisor may comment upon the performance or appraisal of any employee. In these cases, the employee will be provided with a copy of any such comments.

Performance Appraisal Records and Access

The information contained in the performance appraisal is regarded as confidential. Upon completion of the appraisal procedure, the final performance appraisal form will be placed in the employee's personnel file in Human Resources, and any drafts should be destroyed.

The supervisor may keep a copy of the final appraisal document for their information. Subsequent access to these and other personnel records shall be limited to the supervisor, the employee, and/or other appropriate supervisory personnel.