

Supervisor's Guide to Performance Appraisals

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Content Overview

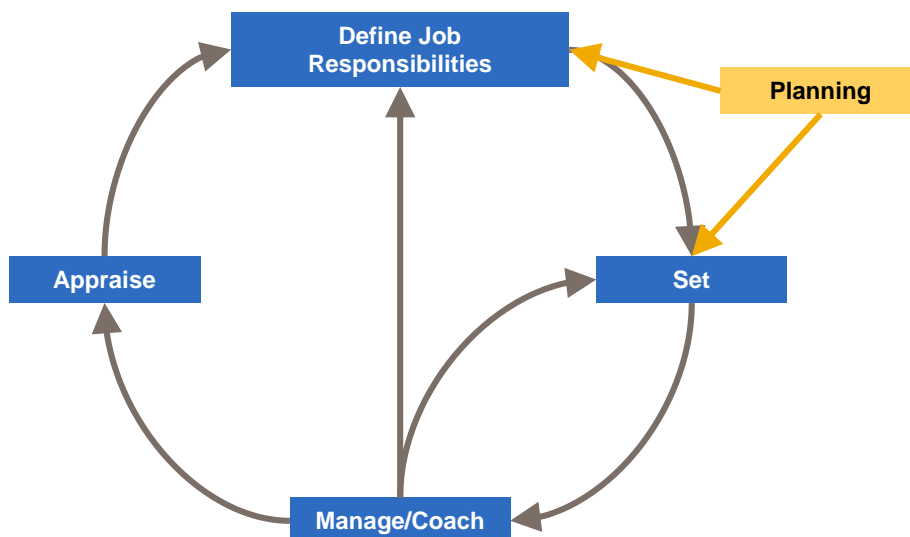
The topics covered in the material include:

- A review of the UCR performance management process.
- How to develop performance expectations and goals.
- Translating subjective assessments into objective terms.
- Writing performance appraisals using objective, behavioral descriptions.
- Conducting a structured performance appraisal meeting.

The goal of the UCR performance appraisal process is two-fold: development and collaboration. While we all associate performance appraisals with evaluation, an often overlooked aspect is the developmental piece. This is an opportunity for you and your employees to focus on their development. In addition, it should be a collaborative process. It is not you, as the supervisor, giving a report card to your employee, but an interactive exchange about the employee's performance.

The UCR Performance Management Process

The four major components of the performance management process are **Planning**, which includes setting expectations and goals and defining job responsibilities; **Managing and Coaching** performance throughout the year; **Appraising Performance**; and **Recognizing and Rewarding Performance**. It is a continuous cycle, not just a once a year event, with feedback linking each part of the process.



Planning for Performance

Key Elements in the Planning Process

- Understand the mission of UCR and your organization.
- Understand your organization's values and goals.
- Link individual expectations to the organization's mission, values and goals.

Key Steps in the Planning Process

1. Ensure that the position description is current.

A review of the position description should be done every year. If duties in the position have changed that do not warrant a reclassification, revisions should be made and forwarded to the Human Resources Department as an Updated Position Description. The employee should also review their position description and be prepared to provide you with feedback regarding changes.

2. Identify the essential job functions.

This refers to the duties that must be carried out by the position – basically the reason the position exists. Have the essential functions changed? Do some need to be added? These essential functions can be used as a guide to setting performance expectations.

3. Develop performance expectations.

4. Develop goals and objectives.

5. Identify applicable performance factors.

The UCR performance appraisal form includes seven performance factors and the option to include "other" performance factors not listed. It should be determined which factors are applicable to the position being appraised and those that need to be added.

Planning for Performance — Setting Expectations and Goals

Understanding the mission and goals of the University and your organization provides a context in which to develop performance standards and goals. It gives you a framework and a direction. Of primary importance, is the employee's ability to see how their performance expectations and goals are linked to the mission of the department.

Setting Expectations

What is a Performance Expectation?

- A description of the results expected for the fully satisfied performance of a job function/task.
- Defines "how well" each function or task must be performed.
- Provides a benchmark against which to evaluate work performance.

When Should Performance Expectations be Set?

- When an employee is hired
- When responsibilities are changed or added
- When clarification of responsibilities is needed

A performance expectation should be:

- Derived from mission, goals and values
- Mutually understood
- Developed collaboratively, if appropriate
- Descriptive of how a job is to be performed
- Descriptive of fully satisfactory performance
- Expressed in measurable/observable terms
- Reasonable and attainable

Setting Goals

In setting goals, use the **S.M.A.R.T.** formula:

Specific

- precise terms
- Targeted

Measurable

- Means for tracking
- How much of what & by when

Attainable

- Assess the stretch
- Evaluate the growth for the employee

Relevant

- Links to results
- Links to higher-level goals (dept.)

Trackable

- Timeframe for actions
- Completion dates

In performance planning, there are typically three types of goals that may be incorporated into the review:

Development goals — goals established for personal/professional growth

Innovation goals — goals established for creating a new process, function or program; higher level of service

Improvement goals — goals established to correct performance that is below standards and requirements.

Goals should be defined when:

- preparing the annual performance appraisal
- performance needs improvement

Managing and Coaching Performance

Performance management is a year round process which means meetings should be held with employees throughout the year to discuss and reassess the employees' progress toward achieving goals and performance objectives.

Listed below are some of the tools that can be used to capture performance.

Observation

It is recommended that managers observe their employees with the intent of documenting behaviors related to performance. Look for:

- **Trends in performance**

- > Is it steadily improving or declining?
- > Does the individual have “peaks and valleys” – spurts of excellent performance followed by extended periods of mediocre performance?

- **Critical incidents**

- > Outstanding successes or failures
- > Performance events that stand out from typical behavior

Documentation

Structured Diary

Experts in performance management recommend that managers spend 30 minutes a week documenting employee performance. Document performance in behavioral terms, rather than inferential or judgmental.

List the performance expectations and goals for the appraisal cycle and space to document date, skills exhibited results of behavior and other comments.

As an example:

Performance Expectation/Goal	Date	Comment
Demonstrate team work	10/05/07	Accepted additional assignment due to a co-worker being out ill.
Produce quality work	2/04/08	Monthly report contained 5 typos and was missing two pages.

Remember provide feedback on performance events that you document.

Unstructured Diary

Informal documentation of performance events. For example, jot down notes about employee behavior in your Daytimer.

Work Samples

Maintain copies of work that illustrate the performance dimensions being measured.

Employee Fact File

A file where notes about performance events and work samples can be maintained. Remember, this file could be viewed by others if necessary.

Appraising Performance

The Performance Appraisal Process

1. The employee will complete the self-appraisal.
2. Gather the documentation you have regarding performance.
3. Write the appraisal.

To prepare for writing the performance appraisal, gather the following information:

- Self-appraisal information
- The employee's job description
- The goals and objectives from the previous performance appraisal (if available)
- Agreed upon expectations for performance
- Your structured or unstructured diaries of employee performance events

Solicit information from others that know the employee's work such as a co-supervisor or Department Head. The primary rater should be the employee's primary supervisor.

Appraising Poor Performance

While most of us think of the performance appraisal as an annual event, there are other times when it is appropriate to conduct a performance appraisal session. Primarily, this is when an employee is exhibiting poor performance or training/coaching is needed.

When completing the annual performance review, if an employee is receiving a rating of "needs improvement" or "unacceptable" on a particular performance factor, it is important to insure that it is truly the performance of the employee that is causing the less than satisfactory results. Be sure to examine the job itself and the context in which the job is being performed. Contact the Labor Relations department if you need assistance in documenting "needs improvement" or "unacceptable" behavior.

Writing the Appraisal

Write supporting comments for performance factors using third person statements.

Example:

Instead of: You have increased your knowledge of fund accounting.

Write: Carl has increased his knowledge of fund accounting.

Use behavioral feedback to support your ratings for performance factors.

- Focus on behaviors rather than judgments to support performance factor ratings.
- Use specific examples.
- Use specific facts.

Verifiable (Specific)	Evaluative (Fuzzy)
Observable	Judgments
Measurable	Assumptions
Accessible to the senses	Interpretations
Actionable	Non-actionable

Examples:

Fuzzy:	This was not your best work.
Specific:	Carl, the project was completed three weeks later than you originally estimated and contained at least five major errors, such as spelling and incorrect calculations.

Fuzzy:	You do a good job running meetings.
Specific:	Sally, everyone on the team appreciates the way you facilitate meetings. You identify the areas in which we are confused, you summarize to help us stay on track, and you maintain your neutrality.

Appraisal Forms

Self-Appraisal Form

Should be used when the standard comprehensive performance appraisal form is being used

Self-Appraisal Form – Narrative Option

Should be used when the narrative comprehensive performance appraisal form is being used

Performance Appraisal Form – Standard Comprehensive Version

Requires ratings on six performance factors to be used for all staff, two additional factors for those with supervisory/leadership duties, and space to include two performance factors that may be specific to the position

Performance Appraisal Form – Narrative Option

Focuses on essential functions, goals, and major projects

Performance Appraisal Form – Update Version

Special conditions apply – see form for instructions

Supplemental Performance Feedback Form

Supervisors may solicit performance information from other sources so long as the source is knowledgeable of the employee's work performance. Employees should be made aware during the planning stages of the performance appraisal process, of the other sources that will be contacted concerning their performance. The sources contacted should also be made aware that their feedback may be used in the performance appraisal, and if so, they will be identified as the source

UCR Individual Development Plan (IDP)

A form used to facilitate an organized approach to improve professional skills and the productivity of the department

Creating Development Plans

Creating Individual Development Plans

Using the information from the employee's self-appraisal form and your own observations, determine the developmental opportunities that will assist the employee not only in achieving short-term goals, but long-term career goals as well.

The greatest employee development comes from managers taking time to develop employees through mentoring, assigning interesting projects and identifying improvement areas." Managers' interest in their employees' development is also a strong motivator. The key to the successful development plan is the follow-up that occurs after the plan has been agreed upon.

Purpose of the Individual Development Plan

The Individual Development Plan (IDP) is an organized approach to professional development activities and programs that are designed to improve the employee's professional skills and the department's productivity. This is a joint process, both in design and execution, in that supervisors are more familiar with the department's future directions and the employee is more aware of specific, individual needs and aspirations.

Developing the Individual Development Plan

The following process is a model. The process involves the following steps:

1. Prepare the Individual Development Plan at the conclusion of the employee's evaluation period.
2. Involve the employee in the design of the IDP. You may want to do this early in the process, when you have only identified major areas where development should take place and let the employee propose the more specific ways to accomplish this. Or, you may prefer to have the employee design the plan and then jointly review and refine the content.
3. Consider each area of the employee's performance from the following perspectives and determine which should be developed in the upcoming evaluation period:
 - Strengths that, if enhanced, will contribute to the overall mission of the organization and increase productivity.
 - New skills that will be needed in the upcoming evaluation period.
 - Areas of performance/skills that need to be improved.

The above constitute the purpose of the development activity. Some additional needs that contribute to establishing the purpose may include:

- Mission need
- Change in technology
- New assignment
- Future staffing need
- Leadership development
- Relationship building

Though you want the IDP to be thorough and cover the individual's major development needs, try to keep it brief and to the point so that it does not give the impression of being unwieldy or overwhelming. Focus on key areas to be developed.

4. Determine the appropriate learning methods and resources that will be needed.
5. Once the learning methods and resources have been selected, define the measures or criteria that will be used to determine if the targeted learning has been accomplished.
6. The supervisor and the employee sign the IDP to document mutual agreement with it and commitment to completing it. Clarify responsibilities with the employee.
7. Set up a reporting system so that the employee's progress can be gauged at any time and adjustments can be made to the plan as needed.

Developmental Activities

Each employee's development plan is unique based on their individual needs and career opportunities. Listed below are a few of the developmental activities that you may want to consider.

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Job rotation > Stretch > Temporary • Committees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Work groups > Presentations • Cross-Training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Changing functions > Shift changes > Working with new people • Develop in Place <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Mentoring > Individual projects > Perspective building > Tough challenge > Shift in size of job | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal Training/Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Professional > Technical > Leadership > Executive • Off the Job Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Joining/leading community groups > Trying a new skill in a volunteer organization > Giving presentations to civic groups • On the Job Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Taking on new projects or assignments > Temporary assignments e.g. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – filling in for someone on vacation > Assuming lead role responsibilities > Improving a process or procedure • Self-Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Readings/Self-study > Professional organizations > College/University Programs > Seminars • Start-ups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > New team > New system/service/process |
|---|--|--|

Conducting the Performance Appraisal Meeting

Performance appraisals are most productive when they are collaborative, both people are prepared ahead of time and there have been discussions about performance throughout the year. The performance appraisal meeting should be a two-way conversation.

Setting the Tone

Be prepared – know the objectives and goals of the meeting.

Time and place – choose a quiet, private spot limited interruptions.

Put the employee at ease by acknowledging that these sessions can cause anxiety but the purpose is to improve performance and to gather information on how you can help in these efforts. Approach the employee you are appraising as a partner rather than a judge. Tell the employee that the performance appraisal meeting is a two-way discussion, not one-way.

Maintain a positive focus. If an employee's overall performance is satisfactory, focus on the factors that led to that success. If an employee's overall performance is not satisfactory, focus on problem-solving rather than fault finding.

Structure of the Meeting

1. Explain the purpose for the meeting.	To discuss the employee's performance over the past year, the job expectations and the organization's expectations.
2. Explain the process of the meeting.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Review past performance.<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Allow employee to share how they view their performance over the past year.• Allow employee to share ideas they have for strengthening their performance.• Supervisor shares their evaluation.• Discuss difference and come to a common understanding.b. Set performance expectations for the next appraisal period.c. Discuss developmental plans and activities that should be conducted during the next appraisal period.
3. Ask if the employee has any questions about how the meeting will proceed	
4. Allow the employee to share their assessment of their performance.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Listen carefully to the employee's self-assessment.b. Focus the employee on specific behaviors, actions and results related to his/her performance.

<p>5. Share your appraisal and overall rating.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provide effective performance feedback. b. Focus on behaviors, actions, and results. c. Reinforce positive performance results. d. Direct critical performance feedback toward performance improvement.
<p>6. Guide the discussion of similarities and differences in the performance appraisal.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Show interest in what the employee has to contribute. b. Ask questions to clarify and to gather information. c. Focus the conversation on performance improvement. d. Seek to understand why the employee chose the behaviors he/she did. e. Arrive at a common understanding on how you and the employee view his/her performance. f. When disagreements occur, ask questions to uncover the underlying reasons for this difference of opinion.
<p>7. Receive feedback and suggestions from the employee.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Focus on the performance issues reported, not the person or personality. b. Carefully listen; take notes. c. Acknowledge the employee's concern. d. Welcome suggestions. e. Remain open to feedback on your own behavior as a manager. f. Clarify any feedback that you receive from the employee on your own leadership.
<p>8. Set performance expectations for the next appraisal period.</p>	
<p>9. Discuss development activities for the next appraisal period.</p>	
<p>10. Close the meeting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Acknowledge your appreciation of the employee's efforts. b. Review the performance expectations and developmental activities. c. Clarify the roles that you and the employee with take in regard to performance expectations and developmental activities and determine the next steps.
<p>11. Allow the employee to make written comments on the appraisal. Insure they receive a copy of the completed appraisal.</p>	

Performance Management Frequently Asked Questions

1. Is the performance appraisal process for career employees only?

While policy and bargaining agreements specify that only regular status employees are required to receive an annual performance appraisal, this does not limit supervisors and managers from appraising all staff members. As an example, many units conduct performance appraisals for student employees.

2. Are all represented and unrepresented staff reviewed at the same time?

Staff eligible to receive an annual performance evaluation should receive the evaluation in August; however, if a supervisor is not available during the summer months it may be necessary for the evaluation to be given prior to August. Consult with Human Resources if a different review period is necessary.

3. How long must an employee be on the job prior to having an annual performance appraisal?

Employees should complete their probationary period before receiving the annual performance appraisal. If an employee is new to a position but has worked in another department, both the current and the previous supervisors should work together to complete the performance appraisal.

In the case of a probationary employee, typically an evaluation should be given midway through the period. This will allow the employee to correct any behavior that may not be meeting standards before the probationary period ends. Check the applicable bargaining contract for the timing and frequency of evaluations to be completed during the probationary period.

4. Can key staff members in my department give input on the performance appraisal of my direct reports?

It is appropriate to solicit input from staff that are knowledgeable of the employee's work performance. How this input is represented on the performance appraisal should be agreed upon by the employees' supervisor and next level supervisor.

5. If an employee is eligible to receive the updated version of the performance appraisal, can they request and receive a comprehensive evaluation?

If an employee requests it, the supervisor should complete the comprehensive evaluation.

6. Are employees required to complete the self-appraisal form?

Employees should complete a self-appraisal prior to the supervisor completing the performance appraisal. The self-appraisal form allows employees to summarize major accomplishments within the review period, list any educational activities accomplished during the review period, state goals/objectives, and provide an opportunity to address other issues. The

supervisor should not delay the performance appraisal if the self-appraisal has not been completed by the specified deadline.

7. I have only been supervising my staff for a short time, should I still complete the performance appraisals?

Yes. Consult with the previous supervisor or the Department Head in completing the appraisals.

8. Does the employee have to sign the performance appraisal?

The employee should sign the appraisal. The employee's signature indicates only that they are aware of the contents of the appraisal, it does not indicate agreement. If an employee refuses to sign, confirm in writing the date in which the appraisal was discussed and provided to the employee.

Start by explaining to the employee that her signature indicates only that she has received the evaluation, not that it constitutes agreement. There is no requirement that an employee sign the evaluation so if the employee refuses to do so, the supervisor should note that the evaluation was presented to the employee and that she refused to sign, and indicate the date on which it took place. The employee may wish to add comments concerning the appraisal, which should be attached to the form. The employee may also have the right to file a complaint or grievance in accordance with appropriate University policy or collective bargaining agreement.

9. If an employee is rated "Needs Improvement" or "Unsatisfactory" overall, is the performance appraisal process handled differently?

Typically, when an employee's performance has been appraised and rated on the performance appraisal form as "needs improvement" or "unsatisfactory," a re-appraisal should be conducted again within three months of the date of the previous performance appraisal. If the employee's performance continues to be "needs improvement" or "unsatisfactory," the supervisor and department head should consider alternative actions available under the Personnel Policies and consult Labor Relations.

10. Is an employee entitled to union representation during a performance evaluation meeting?

Ordinarily employees are not entitled to representation for routine meetings such as performance reviews unless the employee reasonably anticipates that the meeting may lead to corrective action. However, there may be unusual circumstances that trigger a right to representation. Please consult with Labor Relations if this situation arises. Reschedule the performance evaluation meeting if necessary in order to obtain appropriate advice prior to holding the meeting.

Suggested Readings

Analyzing Performance Problems or You Really Oughta Wanna, second edition by Robert F. Mager and Peter Pipe. Published by Pittman Management and Training of Belmont, CA in 1984.

The Business of Listening by Diane Bone. Published by Crisp Publications of Los Altos, CA in 1988.

"Choosing Performance Management: A Holistic Approach," *CUPA Journal*, Summer 1995, v.46, no.2, pp.13 -18 by Rogers Davis, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Human Resources, UCSD.

Coaching and Counseling by Marianne Minor. Published by Crisp Publications of Los Altos, CA in 1989.

The Empowered Manager by Peter Block. Published by Jossey-Bass Publishers in San Francisco in 1987.

First Break All the Rules: What the World's Greatest Managers Do Differently by Marcus Buckingham, Curt Coffman. Published by Simon and Schuster of New York in 1999.

Giving and Receiving Criticism by Patti Hathaway. Published by Crisp Publications of Los Altos, CA in 1990.

Masterful Coaching by Robert Hargrove. Published by Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer of San Francisco in 2002.

Maximum Performance Management: How to manage and compensate people to meet world competition 2nd ed. by Joseph H. Boyett, Ph.D. et al. Published by Glenbridge Publishing Ltd. of Lakewood, Colorado in 1993.

Measurement of Work Performance: Methods, Theory and Application by Frank J. Landy and James L. Farr. Published by Academic Press of New York in 1983.

Perfect Phrases for Performance Reviews: Hundreds of Ready-to-Use Phrases That Describe Your Employees' Performance by Douglas Max, Robert Bacal. Published by McGraw-Hill in 2002.

A Supervisor's Guide for Performance Management by the U.S. Department of Labor. Published by U.S. Department of Labor of Washington, D.C. in 1989.