



PERFORMANCE REVIEW DISCUSSION – GUIDELINES FOR THE SUPERVISOR

The performance review discussion between employee and manager is at least as important as the evaluative outcome. It makes your mutual expectations clear, sets goals for both parties, and maintains open lines of communication. The discussion should be just one part of a year-long process of performance management.

To make the written portion of performance review effective, the supervisor should obtain as much objective information as possible about the employee's performance during the review period. It is a good idea to take notes during the year on both positive and corrective events so you will have concrete examples of behavior to use. Other sources of data about employee performance include performance documentation such as attendance records, letters of complaint or commendation, examples of poor or outstanding work, activity reports, and your notes from observing and coaching sessions.

If you have followed the process so far, by the time you write the performance review, you will have the information to do an effective job. You will have clear standards for goals and duties. You will have a supportable basis for making your reviews. You will have documented the employee's performance and given clear feedback about the performance over the course of the review period. You will have provided the employee with opportunities to improve performance when necessary so there will be no surprises about performance problems.

At the time of the written review, both you and the employee will discuss the process and you will invite the employee's input. If you follow these steps, you will find the process of performance review to be constructive and satisfying.

Prepare the Written Assessment

Think about how well the employee achieved goals/performed duties and demonstrated the University's values based on the standards or expectations you developed. For all functions, consider these questions:

- How does the employee's level of performance compare with the agreed-upon performance standards?

- How was the level of performance confirmed? Did you observe it? Did the employee report it? Are there independent measures or work products?
- What were the consequences, results and impact of the performance?

Use specific examples gathered from your notes in your descriptions of results, describing behavior that did or did not meet the agreed-upon standards.

The Performance Review Discussion

- Give the employee sufficient notice of the time and place of the meeting. Allow at least one hour for the discussion. Hold the review in a private place where you will not be interrupted.
- Bring to the meeting the performance review instrument you have completed, the employee's self-assessment if they have one, and any other relevant documentation, such as the job description, work products, etc.
- Open the discussion by stating the purpose of the meeting and summarizing the points you will be covering.

The objectives for the discussion are to:

- Review, discuss and confirm your understanding of the accomplishment of goals/duties;
 - Recognize strengths and achievements;
 - Confirm previously identified areas needing improvement and agree about how improvement is to be accomplished;
 - Review the employee's career development goals;
 - Set new goals/standards for the next review period;
 - Agree upon the support you will provide the employee in the coming year.
- If the employee has done a self-assessment, consider that in conjunction with your assessment, and discuss areas of agreement and difference. Consider whether anything raised in your discussion of the employee's self-assessment sheds new light on your assessment, and be prepared to modify your review if appropriate. If performance meets or exceeds the standards, recognize these accomplishments.
 - If performance needs improvement, identify specific areas for development and jointly develop an action plan.

- Ask the employee why s/he is not meeting standards. You can offer your own input on possible causes, but avoid health or disability issues, or other areas protected by law. The goal of this discussion is for both of you to understand the reasons why the standards are not being achieved. Ask the employee for potential solutions, and brainstorm together until you both can agree on specific, practical solutions.
- Discuss previously identified areas for improvement. Ask the employee how s/he plans to improve performance and introduce your own ideas for improvement planning. No problems should be raised during the review that you have not discussed with the employee during the review period. Remember to critique the work and specific behaviors/actions, not the person. Be as specific as possible, relating areas of improvement to the work standards.
- Be open to employee questions and concerns. Listen carefully to be sure you understand the issues, and avoid responding defensively. If you need more information, meet with the employee again at a later date. Do not let yourself get caught up in a debate or argument. When employees require corrective feedback, give it straight. When employees merit praise, give it to them.
- Attempt to resolve differences, misunderstandings and disagreements that surface during the review. Be sure that both of you are satisfied that all important points have been covered.
- Write what you will do to support the employee in improving performance and developing skills.
- Set goals and update standards for the next review period.
- Finish the discussion by summarizing what was discussed and the results of the meeting. Reinforce work that was well done. Close on a positive note.

Finalize the Performance Review Discussion

If, during the discussion, you decide to change any of the ratings, note the changes and inform the employee that you will provide a new copy of the review with the changes in a few days. Schedule another meeting to go over the final version of the form.

The last task is to start planning for the coming year by deciding on the goals/duties for the next review period. Note these and provide a copy to the employee. You may do this in the performance review discussion or schedule another meeting at a later time for goal setting.

Obtain the employee's signature on the form to indicate that the discussion was held. Give the employee time to write comments or append documentation to the form. If the employee refuses to sign the form, allow him/her some time to digest the material and prepare any additional documentation. Assure the employee that signing the review does not indicate agreement of the rating, just confirmation that they were given the opportunity to review the document and that performance has been discussed. If the employee disagrees with the review and you are not able to resolve the disagreement, the employee could speak with your supervisor or with Employee Relations. If the employee has not signed the form after a reasonable time, note that information on the form, and sign it yourself. Give the employee a copy of the completed form. Refer to state-specific grievance procedures for more information.

Conduct appropriate follow-up sessions to discuss training, set goals and standards for the next review period, or coach for improved performance.

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