

## **A SUPERVISOR'S GUIDE TO THE STAFF PERFORMANCE EVALUATION PROGRAM**

The purpose of the Performance Evaluation is many fold: specifically it is required by contract which provides that records be maintained on the individual efficiency of the employee. In addition, if used properly, the performance evaluation program can be one of the best tools a supervisor can use in increasing the productivity and efficiency of the employees.

One of the most important supervisory responsibilities is to judge subordinates accurately. It should be your accurate appraisal of the employee's performance. The performance evaluation provides the basis for awarding permanent status or implementing rejection. It provides the basis for disciplinary actions or dismissals and is also necessary to justify or deny merit salary increases. Performance evaluations also let the employee know how he/she is doing. If the rating is positive, it gives the deserved recognition. If the rating is negative, it should be substantiated in writing. Performance evaluations provide a permanent written record of performance. The performance evaluation can also serve to improve employee-supervisor communications and may be used as a supervisory tool which will help supervisors evaluate their recruiting and training techniques.

### **DEFINITION OF PERFORMANCE EVALUATION:**

A performance evaluation, for the purpose of this program, is defined as a periodic evaluation of an employee's performance of assigned duties and responsibilities.

### **BASIS FOR THE EVALUATION:**

The employee should be rated based primarily on the requirements of the position, and not on a comparison of other employees. The basis for evaluation is defined as the performance which may be expected of a qualified, competent and acceptable employee after a reasonable period of training.

### **WHEN PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS ARE REQUIRED:**

Performance evaluations should be conducted by the supervisor at three (3), six (6), and nine (9) month intervals during the probationary period. Employees having two-year probationary periods are to be evaluated at six (6), twelve (12), and eighteen (18) month intervals. Upon attainment of permanent status, yearly evaluations are required thereafter.

Performance reports may be submitted at any time to appraise employees of changes in their performance or to make exceptional performance a matter of record.

The employee's immediate supervisor completes the evaluation form.

## **EVALUATING THE PROBATIONARY EMPLOYEE:**

The probationary, or working test period, is the final and most important stage in the selection process of quality employees. By the end of the probationary period, supervisors should have complete confidence that the probationary employee being evaluated fully meets or exceeds University performance standards in every important factor if he/she is to be recommended for permanent status. It should be noted that probationary employees may be released at any time during their first year of service, normally without appeal, if in the judgment of the Department Head and Administration, the rejection is in the best interest of the University. Should the supervisor have a question in his/her mind as to the general fitness of the probationary employee for the position, he/she should seriously consider the consequences of burdening the department and the University with an employee who may be a liability rather than an asset. The supervisor should also consider the possibility that it would be a disservice to the employee to retain him/her in a position for which that person is poorly suited or altogether unsuited, thus directing him/her away from seeking a more productive and rewarding type of employment. If the employee is unsatisfactory and the performance is clearly documented, it is best to initiate any notice of rejection after the six-month evaluation. This action presumes that the employee has received two evaluations.

It should be kept in mind that before probationary or permanent employees can be properly released for reasons of unsatisfactory performance, there must be documented evidence of a specific nature. Performance Evaluation Reports are intended to provide a written record of specified deficiencies during and/or at the close of the rating period in which the deficiencies were observed. Employee deficiencies affecting job performance which are not recorded on a Performance Evaluation Report cannot properly be used as a basis for rejection or termination.

Title 5 of the California Administrative Code specifies that written notice of rejection for permanent status must be given not less than 30 days prior to the date the probationary period ends. Therefore, the final performance evaluation must be completed and submitted to Personnel Services prior to the end of the 9th month in order for the written notice to be delivered in accordance with the law.

## **GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR RATING:**

1. Familiarize yourself with the contents of the evaluation form and review the employee's job description.
2. Use a process of objective reasoning, eliminating as much as possible personal prejudice, bias, or favoritism. For example, don't allow your own personal likes or dislikes of certain mannerisms or aspects of personal appearance blind you to the more important measures of competency or effectiveness.
3. Consider each factor separately, taking into account only the particular position you are covering. Don't assume that excellence in one factor implies excellence in all factors. Observe and analyze the employee's performance objectively in terms of each factor listed on the rating form.
4. Base your judgment on demonstrated performance - not on anticipated performance. The evaluation is to be based on what **has** happened, not what **might** happen.

5. Evaluate on the experience of the entire rating period - it is better not to consider only single accomplishments or failures, or the most recent performance.

On the other hand, single instances of faulty or brilliant performance should not be ignored. They should be considered in context with the **total** performance for the period.

6. "Seniority" is not a part of a performance rating. Although length of time in a position should affect performance, it may not. Only as the employee improves in proportion to time spent in a position should it be considered as a part of performance rating.

### **INTERPRETATION OF APPRAISAL TERMINOLOGY:**

Each area that is evaluated can be rated as either Excellent, Above Standard, Standard, Improvement Needed or Unsatisfactory. In order to guide you in evaluating employees, and to see to it that all employees are rated in accordance with the same standard, the following descriptions are provided:

1. **Excellent** - Genuine outstanding performance is all you can possibly expect for the area described. It is performance that conspicuously stands out. It is **performance that is uncommon.**
2. **Above Standard** - Above Standard performance is performance that exceeds the requirements of the job. It is performance above that which you would expect of a fully competent person in this position.
3. **Standard** - Is that which you can reasonably expect of a competent person. It is performance that is "Satisfactory".
4. **Improvement Needed** - This is performance that is below what can be reasonably expected of an employee after a reasonable period of time and training. It is unsatisfactory performance.
5. **Unsatisfactory** - Inadequate performance is performance that leads one to consider an employee a liability rather than an asset. This rating is to be used when an employee **clearly fails** to meet the minimum requirements of the area being appraised.

### **HINTS ON HOW TO PROCEED:**

1. Schedule an appointment and allow sufficient time. Select a time when you and the employee are not under great pressure.
2. Provide for privacy with an absolute minimum of interruptions. (If this is the employee's first evaluation interview, anticipate curiosity, tension, or anxiety, and be prepared to minimize these).
3. Review the employee's job description.

4. Decide what you want to accomplish in the session and have clearly in mind the performance criteria used, your reasons for giving the specific rating, and what improvement is needed or possible.
5. Consider the employee's point of view. Anticipate what his/her reaction to the discussion might be. Remember each employee is different and each will react differently in the appraisal session.
6. Be in a good frame of mind. If you are angry or upset, delay the session to a more appropriate time.
7. Have necessary forms or factual information ready to present at the proper time. Having to search for such information during the session is distracting.

### **THE EVALUATION INTERVIEW:**

The discussion of the completed evaluation form is the crux of the whole evaluation process.

It is here that the supervisor is faced with various reactions from the employee. Most employees are doing a satisfactory job and are happy to know where they stand and how they can improve. However, dealing with employees who are not doing a good job or who are skeptical of the ratings is more difficult. Here are some guides the supervisor may use in the evaluation interview:

1. Discuss the employee's strengths first, covering each point in detail. This helps start the interview off in a positive mode. Remember that the aim is to encourage or sustain high quality performance, not to "bawl out" the employee. Compliment the employee without going overboard. Failure to recognize good performance may leave a "what's the use" attitude. However, overdoing it will raise questions about your sincerity and your supervisory ability.
2. While building upon the employee's strengths, do not fail to discuss his/her weaknesses or failures and how that person can prevent or curtail them in the future. Here, introduce your suggestions for a specific improvement program. Give the employee an expected date of improvement - i.e. 30 days, 60 days etc.. Make criticism constructive. If you point out a weakness, be prepared to offer means of correcting it.
3. Clarify the reasons why the ratings were given, citing specific examples of performance. Deal with facts, not generalities. If you can't cite specific examples, you can't include it in the evaluation.
4. Be sure the employee knows what is expected of him/her. Occasionally, when the employee is not doing what you expect, he/she may be confused and actually think he/she is performing as expected.
5. **Ask questions and listen!** Allow the employee to express reactions to the evaluation. You may discover underlying causes for marginal performance.
6. Don't interrupt - but don't let irrelevant topics drag out the discussion.

7. Ask the employee for suggestions on how his/her performance can be improved. Use this opportunity to guide the employee in improving his/her future job performance.
8. Keep the appraisal job-centered. Avoid discussion of personality short-comings unless they adversely affect department operations or the employee's job performance.
9. Try not to show anger or hostility, regardless of the remarks the employee may make. Try to maintain your objectivity.
10. If the employee gets angry - listen. Don't expect to convince him/her of anything while he/she is angry.
11. Allow the employee his/her self-respect. You don't gain much, if anything, by "proving" him/her wrong or by being sarcastic, overbearing, or unduly "hard-nosed".
12. Always reassure the employee of your interest in his/her progress, and indicate willingness to take up the discussion again at any time. However, close the interview when whatever points you intended to cover have been made clear and are mutually understood.
13. If the employee refuses to sign the performance report, note that fact on the form and initial it. You may point out to the employee that signing the performance report indicates only that he/she has seen the report and not that he/she agrees with the contents of the report.

#### **APPRAISAL PITFALLS:**

Distorted appraisals may result if the appraiser does not consider the following possibilities for error:

1. **The so-called "Carry Over Effect"**

This is a tendency to rate a person either too high or too low in several areas because he/she rates high or low in one area.

2. **Consistent Leniency**

Some appraisers tend to "go easy" on people because they believe in being generous towards their fellow man. They rate almost everyone high in almost everything.

3. **Consistent Severity**

Some appraisers tend to be “too tough” on people because they believe in upholding extremely high standards. They rate people low and feel that few can reach the standards.

4. **Central Tendency**

Another type of appraiser refuses to “stick his neck out” and so rates everyone right down the middle.

5. **Prejudice**

Sometimes strong personal feelings toward the person being rated influence the appraiser’s judgment.

6. **Day-to-Day Variation in Point of View**

Just as an appraiser’s outlook on things in general may vary over a period of time from optimistic to pessimistic, so also may his/her attitude fluctuate toward a given individual.