

Performance Review, Evaluation, and Development

Writing Effective Performance Reviews

Before Writing the Review

- ✓ Request Employee Self-Review, comments on goals, if part of procedures for your employees and documentation the employee has on their performance.
- ✓ Gather and review own documentation to support the written review.
- ✓ Review overall job performance, goals and/or priorities from the year.



Writing the Review

- ✓ Use appropriate forms relevant to the job classification and union contract agreements.
- ✓ Include documented facts and first hand observations – NO SURPRISES.
- ✓ Focus should be job related behaviors, actions and results – not personal behaviors or attitude.
- ✓ Assign rating that reflects performance and write specific comments that support the rating.
- ✓ Comments should be free from bias or discrimination.

Additional Tips for Writing Reviews

- ✓ Several reviews to conduct? Start with the easiest.
- ✓ When in doubt read again the next day.
- ✓ Talk to your supervisor about expectations of reviewing draft for support and general agreement before sharing with employee.
- ✓ Make sure you are following all department policies and union contract. Language particularly related to reviews that are receiving overall low ratings and need to include performance improvement plans. (all bargaining unit staff have 90 day notice of overall unsatisfactory review rating)
- ✓ Your staff deserves your honesty and clarity. We all want our staff to succeed and honest feedback is critical for that.



Writing - What to Do & Not to Do

Ratings: “Aren’t we all above average?”

- Employees deserve honesty.
- We can help the employee see where their strengths are and where they need to improve.
- It’s important to the documentation of the performance.



Limit the Effect of Rater Bias

- Recency effect: Reviewing only the most recent performance and not taking into account events throughout the year.
- Leniency error (halo effect): Allowing excellent performance in one area to overshadow the review of performance in other areas.
- Harshness error (horns effect): Allowing unsatisfactory or marginal performance in one area to overshadow the review of performance in other areas.
- Central tendency error: Selecting a "middle of the road" or average rating to describe all performance without regard to actual data and observations.
- Low Tolerance Error: Rating everyone low because of excessively high standards.
- High Tolerance Error: Rating everyone high because of wanting to avoid conflict or hurt anyone’s feelings.

Writing Tips

- Provide specific examples or quantitative, measurable information.
- Use different examples for each goal, expectation or competency.
- Keep your comments descriptive and succinct (focus on facts and measures).
- Use correct grammar, punctuation, spelling; or a bulleted list of accomplishments if there are several instead of a narrative paragraph.
- Avoid generalities, personal judgments, labeling, biases, commenting on personality traits, abrasive language.

“Say What?!?!?”

- “This young lady has delusions of adequacy.”
- “Works well when under constant supervision and cornered like a rat in a trap.”
- “He brings a lot of joy whenever he leaves the room.”
- “Got a full six-pack but lacks the plastic thing to hold it together.”

Avoid Personal Judgments:

- **Example:** “I have noticed that you have a problem checking your reports for accuracy. Obviously, you do not care about how we look to other departments and have no regard for our reputation on campus.”
 - **Improved version:** “I have observed that your reports to the department head have contained inaccuracies three times in the last month. It is important that the reports you submitted are accurate. I am very concerned at how your inaccuracy reflects upon the professionalism of this office.”
- **Example:** “Mark is absent more than he is in the office and he’s always late. He is always blaming his lateness on train problems; if the MTA knew about this they would sue him for defamation.”
 - **Improved version:** “Mark has frequent issues with lateness and attendance. He is regularly absent on Fridays and is consistently late by 10-20 minutes most mornings. It is Mark’s responsibility to arrive at work on time, regardless of the mode of transportation he uses.”

Only Negative?!

- **Example:** “Fails to follow customer request instructions which causes customer problems.”
 - **Improved version:** “Needs to read all information on request form and obtain customer confirmation of plan before executing event details.”

Vagueness

- **Example:** “Disorganized and does not multi-task well.”
 - **Improved version:** “Filing items by project name and on department drive will enable faster retrieval and updates by Pat despite phone and people interruptions.”

