

6. Performance

Preparing evaluations is only a small part of the employee performance process. It is essential that supervisors and managers meet with their employees regularly to discuss expectations, new assignments and work performance. Supervisors should take notes during these discussions and maintain those notes in individual files for each employee. These notes should be supplemented by copies of work products and memos from customers that point out strengths or areas needing improvement. Of course, such work products and memos should be discussed with the employee during the regular meetings.

If a supervisor follows the course of action described above, and keeps notes of regular interactions with the employee, then when the employee's evaluation is due, a complete and accurate record of the entire year is available. Additionally, if the discussions have been documented, **there should be no issue of the employee being surprised when an issue is noted in the performance evaluation.** Consistent attention to the employee's performance allows positive reinforcement of desired work habits and early identification and correction of unacceptable work habits and performance problems.

Again, if you are addressing performance issues with a probationary employee and feel his or her performance will improve with more training and need more time to assess his or her performance, you should consult with your Department Director/Chief and contact the Civil Service and Personnel Department Director about extending the employee's probationary period. The Civil Service and Personnel Director should receive the written request to extend probation at least two (2) pay periods prior to the end of the employee's probationary period.

Remember, you cannot extend the probationary period once the employee has worked the requisite hours for his or her specific classification.

A. What is the supervisor's responsibility regarding employee performance?

First, clearly communicate your expectations. These expectations may include written performance standards for the position, as well as specific objectives for the individual employee. If formal, written performance standards have not been developed for the position, you may want to discuss developing such standards with your manager. You should also give the employee their job specification, departmental OGSM, any department specific job description which has been developed, departmental handbooks, state and federal guidelines, etc. Following this initial discussion, your responsibilities are to:



- Discuss specific objectives, due dates, timeliness, and quality and quantity standards in one-on-one conversations and in group meetings with employees, and confirm specific objectives in writing prior to the beginning of each review period.
- Meet with individual employees regularly to discuss their progress, both positive and negative.
- Counsel when minor performance concerns come to your attention.
- Prepare written evaluations prior to the completion of the probationary period for probationary employees and on an annual basis for all other employees.

B. What are performance expectations?

Performance expectations are the standards for the position and the objectives for the individual employee. These expectations need to be clearly communicated to employees. Expectations often have two aspects:

1. The quantity or timeliness of work products, and
2. The quality or accuracy of those products. **A Standard is what you measure an employee against** i.e., "observes handbook for processing of all requests" or "writes and communicates messages and requests for services clearly." An Objective is a specific goal i.e., "prepares 60 documents per hour" or "install five software packages by December 1, 2010".

Sample Performance Objectives

Employee & Labor Relations Analyst

1. Develop and conduct three-hour training on Corrective Action and Progressive Discipline and present to at least two departments by 6/30/16.
2. On a quarterly basis, provide the number of participants who attended your City-Wide and customized trainings.

Computer Programmer

1. Survey your customers for recommended changes to program X by DATE.
2. Outline your plan to upgrade program X by DATE.
3. Write and test program by DATE.
4. Provide data requirements to customers by DATE, requesting input by DATE.
5. Implement new program and provide procedural instructions to customers by DATE.



Revenue Collector

1. As a monthly average, contact at least 150 accounts per day.
2. Category X cases will be in inventory for no more than 5 days before a first call is made.
3. Cases over \$5,000.00 and thirty (30) days in arrears will have a lien filed within two (2) days of first contact.

Legal Office Specialist

1. Process 35 documents per day.
2. Complete phases one and two of assigned project by January 15.
3. Enter all new cases in the computer system within 24 hours of receipt.

This communication should be in writing, and the employee and the manager should discuss any areas of the expectations that are unclear or changed from any previous expectations. When an employee is new on the job or has their expectations amended, a new copy should be given to the employee.

Performance evaluations must be done on semi-annual basis in order to ensure that the employee is fully informed of his or her progress and establish areas of increased emphasis. In addition to the yearly performance appraisal preparation, the manager should have documentation throughout the appraisal period that brings to the employee's attention his or her positive accomplishments, as well as any concerns that must be addressed to keep performance at an acceptable level.

Counseling is the beginning of this process. However, the supervisor should always write notes or a memo confirming conversations with employees in order for the information to be usable in any resultant written evaluation. Throughout the process of informing the employee of deficiencies, the supervisor's role, along with the manager, is to assist in improving performance, not only by bringing it to her or his attention, but by providing on-the-job training, consistent and frequent assistance, and by supporting the employee's efforts through written communication.

A Department Director/Chief's active review of subordinate supervisors will ensure that supervisors are communicating standards and monitoring performance on a regular basis. The same monitoring and counseling done with individual employees by the supervisor is also a part of the supervisor/Director relationship.

C. What should be done if an employee is not meeting performance expectations?

First, contact Human Resources to discuss the case and develop a strategy. Each case will have its individual characteristics, but the normal steps to be followed are:

1. Formally counsel the employee, giving specific examples of where he or she is not meeting the performance standard(s). Refer to any previous informal counseling sessions that were held and ask the employee if he or she understands the area of concern. It is usually a good idea to have the employee state back to you what the problem is and what you expect so there is no confusion.
2. Document the results of the discussion in writing, and share with the employee ([Sample Performance Improvement Plan](#)). The document should clearly outline your concerns, the employee's response (if any), what the employee has to do to improve, and the steps you will take to assist her or him. Meet with the employee on a regularly scheduled basis, giving specific assignments and deadlines and providing feedback on his or her progress. Document these meetings in writing and give the employee a copy.
3. If the employee does not improve, use the next evaluation period to conduct a formal performance evaluation.

Note: This step (Step 3) should not be taken without consulting with the Department Director/Chief and Human Resources. This evaluation would cover the period of time since the last evaluation, rather than for a full year.

If the employee has not had an evaluation in several years, consult with Human Resources to discuss the option of issuing a Pre-Evaluation Memo ([Sample Pre-Evaluation Memo](#)). Although Pre-Evaluation Memos are not the norm, in situations where there has been a significant change in the employee's performance, a change in supervisor, a lengthy time period since the last evaluation, or a long-term problem that has never been dealt with, a pre-evaluation memo may be appropriate. The Pre-evaluation memo is a tool to advise the employee of an anticipated "Below Standard" (Unsatisfactory or Improvement needed) evaluation. It should clearly outline the expectations for the period assigned.

Performance Improvement Plans (PIPs) should contain objectives for a short (no more than 90 days) period only. If assignments cannot be completed in the next 30-90 days, the PIP can establish target dates for steps or phases of the assignment to be completed within that particular review period. Discussions with the employee must inform her or him that this process is to assist her or him to improve. Your communication with the employee, however,



should also inform her or him of the potential of demotion or dismissal if she or he does not improve to a "Meets Expectations" level during the process.

The length of a PIP an employee receives is determined by such factors as the employee's length of service, the severity of the performance deficiencies, the complexity of his or her position, and the level of progress during the review period. Human Resources can assist with this determination.

D. What is a Transition Memo?

If the supervisor/manager is leaving and there are performance concerns regarding a particular employee, he or she may draft a Transition Memo ([Sample Transition Memo](#)) for the new supervisor/manager. It should cite the employee's strengths and areas where he or she needs to improve.

E. How does the supervisor know what to do next, and when to do it?

If you have determined that the employee is not meeting expectations of the PIP, and will not be able to meet them with additional coaching and time, contact Human Resources to discuss a course of action. In performance cases, there are two options – demotion or dismissal. If an employee has the skills and abilities to do a less complex job, and there are available vacancies, demotion is the preferred option, especially if the employee has previously held a lower classification, unless the current level of performance indicates an inability to perform even the simplest portions of the current position. If the employee's deficiencies demonstrate that demotion is not a viable alternative, the choice would be dismissal.

Both dismissal and demotion are disciplinary actions, and the Appointing Authority initiates the "Pre-Disciplinary Notice". If demotion is a viable option, the employee may choose to voluntarily demote using the [Transfer or Voluntary Demotion Form](#). Speak with the Department of Civil Service and Personnel regarding the possibility of requiring a new probationary period as a requirement for the voluntary demotion. Please see [Sample Pre-Disciplinary Notice](#) and [Sample Pre-Disciplinary Hearing Decision Letter](#) for example letters.