



CONDUCTING COLLABORATIVE PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

SETTING THE STAGE

Supervisors should be communicating key organizational values to candidates throughout the interview process. This allows candidates to decide if they feel that their personal career goals and values are compatible with the organization. The stage for conducting a collaborative performance review is set at the time of hire.

Once a candidate is hired, the supervisor should provide the new employee with a clear description of performance expectations in terms of performance goals. These goals are determined by the supervisor reviewing the job description with the new employee and negotiating measurable performance goals to which both the employee and supervisor can agree. Initial goals should take into consideration any developmental needs to get the employee to a fully functional level within the job role. This discussion should also include information on how performance evaluations will be conducted (including frequency and target dates) and how these performance goals will be rated on the evaluation.

Once performance goals have been established, it is imperative that the supervisor touch base regularly with the employee regarding their progress. The annual performance review should provide a summary of information that has already been communicated to the employee on an on-going basis. Prior to the performance review, there should have been coaching sessions in which the supervisor discussed both successes and areas for improvement with the employee. During the sessions, the employee is encouraged to be an active participant in developing plans for successful completion of goals. Documentation of these sessions will be helpful later in preparing for the annual performance review.

SUPERVISOR PREPARATION FOR THE PERFORMANCE REVIEW MEETING

It is imperative for the supervisor to allow adequate preparation time before the performance review meeting. Hastily prepared performance evaluations may result in inaccurate ratings and poorly communicated messages about performance expectations. Preparation for this meeting should include the following steps:

- **Gather and review all relevant information.** Include all coaching documentation, disciplinary notes, and commendations received during evaluation year. Notes or documentation related to accomplishment of established performance goals should also be included.
- **Solicit feedback from other appropriate leadership.**
- **Review feedback received from co-workers and customers throughout year.** Input from co-workers and customers should only be used in evaluation if it has been previously shared with the employee.
- **Identify specific examples of behavior related to performance standards.** Include situations that demonstrate both effective and ineffective performance.

- **Identify key areas for improvement.** After completion of on-line evaluation form, select two or three key competencies or areas for improvement on which to focus during discussion with employee. (Don't complete final submission of evaluation form to system until after meeting with employee) If there are no areas needing improvement, identify any developmental needs based on employee's interests or organizational needs.
- **Anticipate possible reactions to feedback.** Identify specific examples for those areas for which you anticipate disagreement.

EMPLOYEE PREPARATION FOR THE PERFORMANCE REVIEW MEETING

Prior to meeting to discuss the employee evaluation, the employee should be asked to rate themselves on the performance goals previously established. Many times it is helpful to have the employee use the same tool that will be used by the supervisor to allow a comparison between the two ratings. Preparation of the employee for the performance review meeting should include the following:

- **Explain to the employee the format, purpose, and time frame for performance review.** Discuss time and place review is scheduled and expectations regarding employee preparation for meeting.
- **Identify performance goals for which employee should complete self-rating.** These should be goals for which employee has received regular feedback.
- **Encourage employee to identify specific examples related to completion of performance goals.** These should demonstrate examples when employee was effective in achieving goals.
- **Ask employee to identify areas for further development.** These should include areas of interest as well as organizational needs.

CONDUCTING THE PERFORMANCE REVIEW MEETING

Schedule the performance review meeting to allow for an unhurried discussion. The session should be held in a place that is quiet, free of distractions and allows for confidential discussion. When conducting the performance review meeting include the following:

- **Open meeting with explanation as to purpose and format.** Avoid unrelated conversation but attempt to put employee at ease.
- **Allow employee to share their self-assessment first.** This communicates that you are willing to listen to the employee's ideas and feedback.
- **Listen carefully to employee's comments.** Avoid interrupting or providing your own feedback at this point. It may be helpful to make notes or ask clarifying questions. Questions should be neutral in tone and designed to help you understand key points made by the employee. Avoid being defensive.
- **Be open to revising the evaluation based on the employee's comments.** At times new information provided by employee may alter your assessment of the employee's performance.
- **Present your performance rating starting with areas of agreement.** Identify those areas in which you and the employee agreed and discuss first. Don't read every point but cover the most important issues.

- **Present areas of disagreement starting with minor disagreement and moving to more significant areas of disagreement.** Confine comments to observable behaviors and avoid opinion about motive. Provide clear examples of how expected behavior differs from actual behavior. (This should be no surprise if coaching has occurred)
- **Present only the most significant points about performance.** There may be minor performance issues but these should be discussed at a later time. Focus on the most significant areas that need improvement.
- **Ask employee to identify any barriers to successful performance.** The employee may identify issues that prevent him/her from meeting expected performance standards. Be open to revising the assessment if these barriers are outside the employee's control.
- **Engage employee in identifying possible solutions to performance gaps.** Performance is much more likely to improve if the employee develops the plan and takes ownership.
- **Ask employee how you can support them in meeting performance goals.** This may take the form of providing resources or training opportunities. It may also involve more coaching or feedback related to goals.
- **Communicate to the employee his/her importance to the University's mission.** Knowledge about how the employee's performance contributes to the overall mission of UTMB can be very motivating.
- **Use the performance review meeting as an opportunity to recognize good performance.** Be sure to identify areas in which the employee has performed well and discuss them.
- **Avoid discussing salary or merit during the performance review meeting.** Discussion of merit or salary may distract attention from the key issues in the performance review. Schedule salary and merit discussions for a later time.
- **Agree on next steps.** Identify developmental plans such as training, additional assignments or other activities. Include a plan for follow-up based on key issues identified.
- **Summarize key points.** Include key areas to be addressed and developmental plans associated with those areas. Set time for follow-up. Express confidence that employee can meet performance goals.