UIS

PERFORMANCE
EVALUATION HANDBOOK

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INTRODUCTION

This handbook is designed to prepare supervisors for the performance evaluation process at the University of Illinois Springfield. It may not answer every question you have about the performance evaluation process; therefore you are encouraged to contact the Office of Human Resources for clarification of unanswered questions. This handbook will provide you with a basic working knowledge of the performance evaluation process, lend uniformity to its interpretation, and serve as a good starting point for learning how to conduct a performance evaluation.

All supervisory employees are encouraged to become thoroughly familiar with the contents of this handbook before initiating a performance evaluation interview.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION PROCESS

Purpose

The evaluation process is designed to achieve optimum employee performance by facilitating two-way communication between the employee and his/her supervisor. The best way to measure the success of an evaluation session is the degree of participation by the employee. An evaluation should be a discussion, not a lecture. The more an employee participates, the more productive the evaluation session will be.

Used correctly, the performance evaluation process will assist the supervisor and employee in accomplishing two basic functions: employee development and promotional consideration.

1. **Employee Development**

   a. Provide a framework for judging the work, not the person. If the performance evaluation is conducted properly, it will help the supervisor and employee to have a clear understanding of job expectations.

   b. Provide feedback on how the employee is performing in relation to job expectations and standards of performance.

   c. Provide a framework for coaching the employee on improving his/her performance.

   d. Identify and correct undesirable performance and/or reinforce desired performance. The evaluation should reflect specific instances of undesirable and/or desirable performance, including dates and details.

2. **Promotional Consideration**

   Provide supporting documentation for salary adjustments and promotions.

Required Performance Evaluations

The annual performance evaluation is required for *all* employees including those hired during the evaluation period. For example, if the evaluation period is April 1, 2010 to March 31, 2011, an employee who started working on or before March 31, 2011 shall participate in an annual performance evaluation.

If an employee is also due for a probationary evaluation, use one form and mark both the probationary evaluation and the annual performance evaluation boxes on the instrument.

Conducting Performance Evaluations

It is almost impossible to supervise without evaluating the performance of the employee. It is certainly not possible to supervise effectively without conducting performance evaluations and taking measures to correct performance deficiencies.

The job of conducting performance evaluations is a continuous process. Informal evaluations should take place periodically throughout the entire year. It is not necessary to use the Performance Evaluation Form for informal evaluations. Although this handbook explains the formal process for evaluating the employee, supervisors are encouraged to give feedback outside of the formal evaluation. Feedback and coaching should occur on a continual or "as needed" basis, rather than as a scheduled activity. Ideally, there should be no surprises for the employee during the actual formal evaluation sessions. There are two reasons for year-round coaching:

a. Employees are better able to accept and adapt to the supervisor's evaluation if it occurs periodically, rather than in a comprehensive annual review; and

b. Feedback becomes less effective as time lapses between performance and feedback.

A formal evaluation of employee performance is to be completed on an annual basis. To prepare for the formal evaluation, the supervisor *may* solicit informal oral or written feedback about an employee from others who work with the employee on a regular basis (e.g. co-workers, clients, individuals who the employee supervises). The evaluation instrument itself, or portions thereof, may be used for this purpose; or a less structured feedback instrument tied to the employee's specific job duties and responsibilities may be developed and used. To obtain the cooperation of those providing feedback, it is advisable to use a process that ensures anonymity. Following the formal evaluation, the completed evaluation forms are to be submitted to the Office of Human Resources after all required signatures have been obtained. The supervisor and the employee should each keep a signed copy.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OBSTACLES

There are several obstacles common to most employee evaluation processes. By becoming familiar with the obstacles, the supervisor will be better equipped to overcome identified barriers. Barriers may include the following:

1. Supervisors do not receive adequate training in the techniques of evaluating employee performance. Supervisors may lack the techniques necessary to handle the evaluation interview effectively, as these techniques are quite different from other day-to-day contacts with the employee.

2. The formal evaluation interview is uncomfortable for both the supervisor and the employee. There is a tendency for a supervisor to avoid confronting an employee with information regarding poor performance and justifying this criticism. The supervisor may also feel uncomfortable in discussing the employee's strengths. Likewise, the employee may be uncomfortable and find it difficult to accept praise or become defensive when areas of poor performance are discussed. This is why evaluations must be objective and job related. There is a certain degree of subjectivity inherent in the evaluation process because each individual brings his/her individual bias to the evaluation process. Eliminate bias, even if you can't eliminate all personal judgment from the evaluation process. Some common subjective errors in the evaluation process include:

   a. **Halo Effect:** The tendency to allow extremely positive or negative ratings on certain performance categories to influence judgments on other categories. To overcome the halo effect, the supervisor should review the employee's entire performance.

   b. **Leniency/Severity:** Evaluations which occur in the extreme range of the performance scale reflect upon the supervisor as being too hard (severity) or too easy (leniency) in rating the performance of most employees. To overcome leniency/severity, the supervisor should consider using more measurable, observable and determinable criteria.

   c. **Central Tendency:** This error occurs when a supervisor does not want to give high or low ratings, with the result that most employees receive evaluations ranked in the middle of the performance scale. To overcome central tendency errors, the supervisor should be objective in his/her review of the employee's performance and be willing to rate the employee according to his/her performance.

   d. **Assimilation/Differential Effects:** Supervisors unconsciously commit the error referred to as the "similar-to-me effect" in which they tend to rank employees they perceive to be similar to themselves higher than those they perceive to be different. To overcome assimilation/differential effects, the supervisor should review each employee's performance on his/her own merits.

e. **Recency:** There is a tendency for a supervisor to be influenced in his/her evaluation of an individual's performance by the employee's most recent performance or behavior. To overcome the recency effect, the supervisor should review the employee's performance over the entire year.

f. **Top Heavy Rating:** Some supervisors have a rating of *good* as their lowest rating. This may result in employees being rated higher than is justified. To overcome a top heavy rating effect, supervisors should accurately rate the employee according to his/her performance.

The employee evaluation session is a time when fair and formal judgment is used to measure the employee's ability and performance.

GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING A SUCCESSFUL EVALUATION INTERVIEW

The evaluation interview is the primary element in the evaluation process. During the evaluation, the supervisor and the employee are provided with an opportunity, free from outside distractions, to mutually discuss the employee's performance over the evaluation period. When utilized correctly, the interview should clarify the job standards expected, strengthen the understanding between the supervisor and employee and create two-way communication. To achieve these ends, the following guidelines are recommended:

1. ***Notify the employee*** at least one week in advance of the date scheduled for the interview. This will provide the employee with a sufficient amount of time to conduct a self-analysis and be prepared to participate in the evaluation interview. The self-evaluation must be accomplished by completing the evaluation form and submitting it to the supervisor before the evaluation interview occurs. The employee self-analysis should be provided to the supervisor in advance of the interview. Employees are to submit written comments and/or mark the boxes on the evaluation form for their self-evaluation. Employees are encouraged to submit written comments with their self-evaluation.

2. ***Allow approximately 45 minutes to one hour*** for each interview so that time constraints will not hinder an open exchange of communication.

3. ***Select a location*** for the evaluation interview that provides for privacy and is free from interruptions. If the interview is to be conducted in your office, make arrangements to have someone else answer your phone. Distractions may give the employee a signal that he/she is not important. Make every attempt to avoid this perception.

4. ***Review the performance factors on the evaluation form*** prior to the interview. Make initial comments relating to each part. This is the time when the supervisor should review the employee's performance over the evaluation period. Has the employee completed established goals and performed to the standards set at the beginning of the period? If not, why? You may wish to "pencil in" your evaluation of the levels of performance demonstrated by the employee in each category along with supporting examples. It is recommended that the supervisor provide the employee a "draft" copy of the completed evaluation form in advance of the interview.

5. ***Listen.*** Remember that the interview is a two-way communication process. Provide the employee with ample time to discuss any points he/she feels are relevant. Do not interrupt.

6. ***Keep your focus*** on the employee's job performance. Avoid judgments regarding the employee's personality, mannerisms, or other factors that have no bearing on the

individual's ability to perform the job. By focusing on performance rather than personality, you will avoid the impression of "attacking" the employee as a person.

7. ***Be specific in your praise and criticism***. Do not merely say that you are satisfied or dissatisfied with the employee's performance and point to specific examples. Without specifics, the employee will find it difficult to improve unsatisfactory behavior or be recognized for any positive contributions. Throughout the year, you should routinely take note of incidents of good performance or performance that requires improvement. These should be considered in context with the total performance for the period. Do not rely on your memory of the employee's performance over the twelve-month period. Remember to write down your observations because there is a tendency to let the most recent performance dominate the evaluation.

8. ***The performance evaluation interview is not primarily used for reprimand or discipline***. It should develop a better understanding between the employee and the supervisor regarding expectations and results. The supervisor is to handle discipline outside the evaluation process and at the time the employee exhibits the behavior causing the need to discipline. During the evaluation, mention should be made of the reprimands received, however, the supervisor should not wait for the evaluation process to take care of specific performance problems. The evaluation should not contain any surprises to the employee if the supervisor has provided appropriate feedback throughout the year.

EMPLOYEE EVALUATION FORMAT SUMMARY

The design of the UIS Performance Evaluation process is a performance-based evaluation system whereby the supervisor and employee attempt to agree on acceptable performance standards for which the employee is responsible. In this type of system, the employee clearly understands what is expected through the setting of job performance standards. The process also recognizes that there are performance factors common to all positions that should also be considered as a basis of evaluation.

Employee Performance Evaluation Form

The evaluation form will be used by the following employee groups: Academic Professionals, Civil Service exempt/non-exempt - both status and probationary.

The employee performance evaluation form consists of three components: Performance Factors, Rating Criteria and Performance Measures.

Performance Factors

These are common job related skills which all individuals possess to some degree and are reflected in the employee's day-to-day activities.

Performance factors are defined as follows:

1. **Job Knowledge:** Demonstrates knowledge and skills necessary to perform the job effectively, including language, grammar, spelling, mathematics, reasoning, and any job-specific technical procedural competencies. In certain positions, this includes knowledge of university policies, rules, procedures, and their supporting statutes. Understands the expectations of the job and remains current regarding new developments, technologies, methods, theories, approaches, and processes in the area of responsibility.
2. **Judgment:** Anticipates and identifies problems; proposes and evaluates alternative solutions; is open to new or different solutions. Demonstrates maturity in taking or recommending appropriate actions and in determining which problems to handle independently and which to refer to more senior personnel; follows up on problems and helps to bring about resolution. Employee is responsible for assigning work to others appropriately and follows up on tasks assigned.
3. **Reliability and Commitment to the Job:** Works efficiently; uses time effectively; takes initiative in addressing problems. Meets scheduled deadlines without sacrifice of accuracy, quality, or service recipient satisfaction; reports unavoidable delays well in

advance of deadline. Meets the work schedule expectations of the position. Demonstrates flexibility and willingness to assist by taking on difficult or inconvenient responsibilities. Complies with University and unit policies and procedures.

4. **Customer Service:** Listens to and understands the needs of the service recipient, whether inside or outside the University, and responds to those needs. Uses collaborative solutions in problem-solving as appropriate.
5. **Productivity:** Consistently achieves desired outcomes with a minimum of avoidable errors and problems in a way that reflects credit upon the unit and the University. Completes an adequate volume of work and establishes appropriate priorities for fulfilling various job tasks.
6. **Communication Skills:** Effectively conveys ideas and information in writing and/or orally; productively participates in meetings. Contributes to an environment that encourages communication within departments and throughout the campus. Demonstrates respect for all individuals.
7. **Teamwork, Cooperation, Attitude & Interpersonal Skills:** Establishes and maintains effective working relationships with others. Shares information and resources with others. Follows instructions of supervisor and responds to requests from others on the team in a helpful manner. Displays a positive attitude toward others and work responsibilities. Makes suggestions to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the work unit with due concern for others on the team; participates in processes that encourage diversity and equal opportunity.
8. **Supervision and Leadership:** Complete only for individuals with supervisory responsibility. The extent to which the employee applies sound, acceptable supervisory practices in the execution of his/her supervisory responsibilities. Demonstrates the ability to assign and/or delegate tasks, assignments and projects and is responsible for their outcome. Consider evidence of demonstrated skill in generating interest and enthusiasm in subordinates rather than solely relying on authority to get the job done. Consider the employee's effectiveness in selecting and developing personnel and the extent to which personnel decisions represent an effort to implement affirmative action goals.

Rating Criteria

When assigning a level of performance for each performance factor, utilize the following procedures:

- Consider each performance factor separately. Familiarize yourself with the definition of each performance factor found in the preceding section and the definition listed on the Performance Evaluation Form.
- Review the descriptive statements associated with each performance factor. These statements are guide statements and provide a general illustration of the performance associated with the particular performance level. They are not absolute.
- Review the self-evaluation analysis with the employee. This should provide valuable insight as to the employee's perspective of his/her performance in relation to the performance factors.

Performance Measures

After evaluating the individual's performance, determine the level of performance which best describes the employee's ability and performance for each factor. Again, use the descriptive statements for each level of performance to assist in the determination. Five (5) levels of performance have been identified.

The performance of most employees should be at the "Performs Commendably" level signifying a fully competent performer. Alternatively, only a few employees would typically qualify for the "Exceeds Expectations" and "Needs Improvement/ Unacceptable" performance levels. Small units may not approximate a normal distribution; the larger the unit, the more probable it is the distribution will approximate a normal curve.

The following guidelines generally describe levels of performance for employees:

Performs Commendably: This rating is earned by employees who accomplish all of the projects, tasks and key operational responsibilities. Employees in this category are fully competent employees who perform well in all responsibilities. These employees can be relied upon to complete most work tasks without assistance.

Needs Improvement: This level of performance is assigned to employees who do not accomplish some of the projects, tasks and key operational responsibilities or their work products are of less than acceptable quality. Employees in this category sometimes fail to fulfill the work requirements of the program to which they are assigned. There are management problems in the area of these employee's responsibilities, and some of the problems may require intervention of the employee's supervisor.

Unacceptable: This level of performance is assigned to employees who have failed to satisfactorily complete tasks in a number of the areas applicable to their assignment. Employees in this category fail to perform to such an extent that they do not meet the

minimum requirements of their position or have been rated "Needs Improvement" on previous evaluations without improving performance.

Exceeds Expectations: This level of performance is earned by employees who accomplish all of the projects, tasks and responsibilities well in advance of the deadlines and usually accomplish high quality results with respect to their assignments. They frequently complete projects and tasks independently and show initiative in accepting new assignments. They generally exceed the established goals for their position.

Insufficient Opportunity to Observe: This level can only be used for academic professional employees when an employee has been in a position for less than three months.

In the "Comments" section, add specific comments which support the level of performance you have selected for each category. If the individual is evaluated as "Needs Improvement," "Unacceptable" or "Exceeds Expectations," it is mandatory that the remarks section be completed. The reason for evaluating the employee's performance as "Needs Improvement" or "Unacceptable," as well as steps for improvement should be listed.

Employee Work Related Goals

Employee work related goals should be developed as part of the employee's evaluation process. The goals section is included in the performance evaluation form and should be discussed during the meeting with the employee and completed on the form. Goals are specific statements which identify key areas of responsibility in terms of the results expected.

Goals should possess the following qualities:

- Be consistent with department goals
- Be clear and concise
- Be completed in a specific time frame; always show when a goal is to be completed
- Be achievable, yet challenging
- Be measurable
- Be results-oriented, a guide to action, stating what to achieve, not how to achieve it
- Be mutually agreed upon by the individual and supervisor
- Be accomplished through specific activities; the activity answers the question how to achieve the objective.

For example:

Goal/Activity: by June 30, (year) an audit of the attendance system will be completed to determine whether or not procedures are up-to-date with one another.

Measure: determine to what extent procedures of the various areas of responsibility are in concert.

Supervisory Review of Evaluation

Supervisors are required to discuss the employee's performance measures with his/her unit head prior to the performance interview. This will help supervisors and unit heads to reach a mutual understanding regarding the employee's performance and reduce the possibility of the unit head disagreeing with the performance evaluation. It is the responsibility of the employee's immediate supervisor to review and discuss the results of the performance evaluation with the employee. The Dean/Director/Division Head will also review, sign and approve the performance evaluation form.

Employee Comments

1. In this section, the employee being evaluated is given the opportunity to add comments pertaining to how the supervisor or organization can assist and support the employee in his/her efforts to perform satisfactorily.
2. In this section, the employee being evaluated is given the opportunity to add any additional comments he/she may have regarding the contents of the evaluation.

Signatures

The employee and supervisor are required to sign the evaluation form. Prior to signing the form, the employee and the evaluator should be certain that entries have been made in all applicable parts of the form before signing. No employee or supervisor should sign an incomplete or blank form. The employee's signature indicates that the employee was evaluated and is aware of the contents of the evaluation; it does not indicate agreement with the contents of the evaluation. If the employee refuses to sign for any reason, explain that the signature does not necessarily imply agreement with the evaluation and that space is provided for the employee's comments.

There is an area in the signature portion for the employee to agree or disagree with what is stated in the evaluation. This portion should also be completed. Once the performance evaluation form has been signed by all the parties, the employee and the supervisor shall retain a

copy. The original performance evaluation form will be maintained by the Office of Human Resources.

Supervisor Nomination of Employee for "Outstanding" Performance

A supervisor may nominate an employee for an "Outstanding" performance only if the employee was evaluated as "Exceeds Expectations" in all, or all but one, of the categories of employee performance on the Performance Evaluation Form. The supervisor must also document that the employee is consistently performing above the "Performs Commendably" standard of evaluation. A supervisor must complete the nomination form and forward the nomination (along with a completed copy of the employee's current Performance Evaluation Form) to the next level supervisor for review and decision. Comments are required for any employee nominated for "Outstanding" level of performance. The following guidelines generally describe the levels of performance for this category:

> **Outstanding:** This level of performance is achieved by employees who accomplish all of the goals and responsibilities at an excellent level of performance. They frequently far exceed expected performance standards and achieve outstanding results in completing assignments. They show outstanding ability to understand departmental/unit needs and may develop innovative systems and operations. When appropriate, they assist subordinates or co-workers in their development and willingly accept and carry out special assignments in an outstanding manner.