

## Performance Evaluation Guidelines

- Employees understand expectations when they receive feedback, praise and criticism of their work, as well as have notice of any shortfalls in their performance or conduct.
- All employees deserve coaching and opportunities to address areas that may not meet expectations.
- The evaluation process may nip many employment problems in early stages.
- Performance evaluations may reduce legal risks by demonstrating documentation of employee's job related issues. Discipline and termination documentation in the personnel file demonstrates the employee had notification and an opportunity to correct the deficiencies.
- The goal should be to allow all employees to meet or exceed expectations.
- Good employees should be recognized and rewarded.
- Evaluations demonstrate written documentation that fairness and equity exists in the work environment.

## Evaluating Standards and Developing Goals

- **Performance Standards.** Performance standards describe what you want the employee to accomplish and how you want the job done.
- **Goals.** Unlike performance standards, goals describe specifics to each employee; supervisors establish departmental needs and goals with and/or for the employee. For example, a goal for a graphic artist might be to learn a new software program that will make his/her work more efficient; for an accounting professional a goal might be to take the exam to become a certified public accountant.

## Evaluation Meeting

- At least once a year, supervisors should formally evaluate each employee by completing a written performance evaluation and hold a meeting with the employee to discuss his/her performance evaluation. Communication should occur during the year as needed or on a scheduled basis.
- The employee is strongly encouraged to complete the **Employee Self-Assessment Performance Evaluation**. A supervisor may require the employee to complete it prior to the performance evaluation meeting.
- Remember, this is likely to be one of the most important meetings you have with each employee all year, so schedule enough time to discuss each issue thoroughly.
- At the meeting, let the employee know what you think went well during the year and which areas could use improvement. Using your evaluation as a guide, explain your conclusions about each standard and goal. Listen carefully to his/her comments -- and ask the employee if he/she wish to add comments to the form.

## Evaluation Tips

Evaluations can be difficult. Some react to criticism defensively. Avoid these problems by following these rules:

- **Be Specific.** When you set standards and goals, spell out exactly what he/she will have to do to achieve them. For example, don't say "work harder" or "improve quality." Instead, say "make no more than three errors per day in data input." Similarly, when you evaluate, give specific examples of what the employee did to achieve -- or fall short of -- the goal.
- **Be Realistic.** If you set unrealistic or impossible goals and standards, everyone will be disheartened -- and will have little incentive to do their best if they know they will still fall short.
- **Be Honest.** If you avoid telling the employee about performance problems, he/she won't know what needs to improve. Be sure to give the bad news, even if it is uncomfortable.
- **Be Complete.** Write your evaluation so that an outsider reading it would be able to understand what changes, if any, are necessary. Remember, the evaluation just might become evidence in a lawsuit. If it does, you will want the judge and jury to understand why you rated the employee as you did.
- **Evaluate Performance, Not Personality.** Focus on how well or poor the employee does the job -- not on the personal characteristics or traits. For instance, don't say the employee is "angry and emotional." Instead, focus on the workplace conduct that is the problem -- for example, you can say the employee "has been insubordinate to line managers twice in the past six months. This behavior is unacceptable and must stop."
- **Listen To Your Employee.** The evaluation process should be part of a discussion and the employee should have an opportunity to express his/her concerns, too. Ask the employee what he/she enjoys about his/her jobs and about working at the University and department. Also, ask about any concerns or problems he/she might have. You'll gain valuable information, and your employee will feel like a real participant in the process. In some cases, you might even learn something that could change your evaluation.

**Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)** is required if expectations are not being met. The supervisor should identify specifically the improvement needed and how the supervisor will offer assistance, if applicable. A PIP may be written at any time during the year the employee is not meeting expectations, to allow as much notice as possible. Human Resources should review the PIP in advance of a meeting with the employee.

Establish meetings for feedback with the employee at least once per month. This is very important, the supervisor should demonstrate they met with the employee as outlined in the PIP.