EHE MANAGER’S GUIDE

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN ECOLOGY
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Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide a brief overview of the annual performance management process and to provide additional information on how to complete the performance management form.

I. Goals and Objectives of the Performance Management Process

The primary goal of the annual performance management process is to support the university’s philosophy of inspiring excellence by rewarding performance and accountability. The performance management process should allow managers and employees to communicate, share ideas, opinions, and information, with no surprises or anxiety. By completing this process, employees and managers should engage in an authentic evaluation process that affects positive change in both the employee’s performance and behavior.

The goals of the performance management process are to:

- Allow employees and managers to learn from the past to improve the future
- Identify and reflect on the employee’s contributions to the unit/department and college goals
- Clarify the unit/department’s priorities and determine the corresponding tasks or principles on which the employee must focus, daily, monthly, and throughout the year
- Identify how the employee can be a more effective contributor
- Identify ways that the manager can support the employee
- Identify how and when feedback will be given to the employee

II. Goal Setting and Employee Development Planning

Setting strategic plan goals, which create organizational alignment with the unit/department and college plans, and linking unit/department goals to development strategies for employees will be covered below.
A. Connect Organizational Goals to the Performance Management Process

To maximize the success of an organization, it is optimal to have the department and college goals interwoven into the unit’s activities, including the creation and development of performance plans and SMART goals and performance objectives. The intent of which should reflect the unit/department and/or college objectives and strategic plan.

B. Defining Operational Excellence

To aid in building organizational excellence, all performance plans should outline expected core duties. Core duties are fundamental and routine tasks that ensure that the operations of the department are functioning at an optimal level. Examples of which are activities such as entering appropriate requests in the Human Resource Action (HRA) system, entering and approving time in eTimesheet and eLeave, and all other standard activities that ensure organizational accuracy and compliance.

C. Calibrate the Organization’s Strategic Plan

Review the strategic plan developed for your respective area and recalibrate to accommodate course corrections and/or unplanned directional changes to guide your operations. Each unit’s strategic plan should vertically align to the department and college’s goals. Vertical alignment refers to the internal support of employees behind the department/college goals and norms.

Managers and employees should discuss and agree upon performance objectives that vertically align to unit objectives that are cascaded to each team within a department. Additionally, performance plan objectives should be calibrated with on-going initiatives among peers and teammates to reduce redundancies and increase efficiencies.
D. Review Position Description

A successful performance management system drives employee behavior to connect with organizational goals and objectives. This reinforcement occurs because job responsibilities and expectations are clear, resulting in increased individual and group productivity. Therefore, it is essential that both the manager and employee review the employee’s position description at the beginning of the performance management process. It is crucial that the position description contains tasks and duties that accurately reflect the unit/department goals.

III. Setting Individual Performance Expectations and Identifying Priorities

A. Set Individual Performance Expectations

Setting performance expectations and individual goals motivates employees into channeling their efforts toward achieving unit/department objectives. Getting employees involved in the planning process helps them to appreciate the department goals, what needs to be done, why it needs to be done, and what success looks like. Equally important is the how and instilling that we expect our employees to embody the core values of college and university while completing their work. It should be noted that employees who have the same or very similar positions in an area can utilize the same base performance plan; with minor adjustments to the plan to recognize the unique development progress of individual employees.

B. The SMART Goal Methodology

Employee goals should be developed using the SMART goal methodology in creating employee performance objectives. SMART goals are designed to help improve achievement and success. A SMART goal clarifies exactly what is expected and the measures used to determine if the goal is achieved and successfully completed.
A **SMART** goal is:

**Specific** (and strategic): Linked to an employee’s position description, organization or team goals, and/or the overall college mission. The goal should be precise, detailed, focused and unambiguous.

**Measurable**: Success and results of actions can be tracked as progress is made towards achieving the goal. **Attainable**: Performance goals are realistic and can be achieved in the defined specific amount of time and are reasonable.

**Relevant** (results oriented): Goals are aligned with current tasks and projects of the college and the organization and add value in one defined area; include the expected result.

**Time framed**: Goals have a clearly defined time-frame including timelines, milestones, deadlines, delivery dated for the achievement of the goal.

**Examples of SMART and Not - SMART Goals:**

**Not - SMART**: Improve customer service.

**SMART**: Achieve and maintain an average customer service rating of at least 4.0 (out of a possible 5.0) by the completion of our annual survey on April 30, 2025.

**Not - SMART**: Create the unit’s 2025 strategic plan.

**SMART**: Create the unit’s 2025 strategic plan, obtain final approval from executive leadership, and discuss with department so individuals can begin setting performance objectives by July 2025.
Not - SMART: Improve project management skills.

**SMART:** Take the Project Management Essentials workshop on November 18, 2024, report what was learned to our team by January 1, 2025, and apply the relevant concepts while implementing our 2025 IT plan.

Not - SMART: Send out welcome letters to new students.

**SMART:** Produce and distribute personalized welcome letters, error free, to all new students by September 26, 2024.

Not - SMART: Be more receptive to coaching suggestions and feedback.

**SMART:** At our monthly progress meetings, ask for feedback on what you are doing well and what things to improve. Keep a notebook with this information, try out the suggestions, and document each week what worked and what did not work.

Not - SMART: Keep the department’s website up-to-date.

**SMART:** Solicit updates and new material for the Website from department managers on the first Friday of each month; publish this new material by the following Friday. Each time materials are published, review the website for materials that are out-of-date and delete or archive.

**C. Goal Weighting Methodology for Performance Objectives**

Assigning weights to performance objectives allows an organization to communicate their relative priority. Weighting can be an especially useful tool in the performance management process when there is a need to place greater importance on a particular objective. However, weighting can easily lose its value to your unit/department when all items are assigned the same or very similar weight.

Thus, performance objectives should be weighted on the basis of organizational time commitment, priority and impact. The percent totals must add up to 100 percent. Each employee should have no less than three and no more than five weighted objectives.
It is important to remember that weighting does not replace communication around organizational or individual priorities. All managers must remain cognizant that just because they have assigned a weight to an objective, this does not mean that the employee will automatically understand its priority or the value to the unit/department. It is crucial for managers to have discussions around priorities and to regularly review the employee’s progress towards completion of the objective as part of the performance management processes.

**D. Explanation of Performance Objective Ratings**

“Rating” means evaluating the employee’s performance against the elements and standards in an employee’s performance plan, summarizing that performance, and assigning a rating of record. When assigning a rating for each identified objective, the following should be considered:

- The employee’s performance for the entire period, not just the most recent information
- How well the employee performed the responsibilities and tasks included in their position description and the quality and/or timeliness of the employee’s accomplishments
- Whether and how well the employee met assigned performance goals

The information below contains more information on the characteristics that an employee would exhibit for each of the available performance ratings:

“**Exceeded**”

The employee’s performance far exceeded expectations due to exceptionally high quality of work performed in all essential areas of responsibility, resulting in an overall quality of work that was superior; and either included the completion of a major goal or project, or made an exceptional or unique contribution in support of unit, department, or college objectives. This rating is achievable by any employee though given infrequently.
Likewise, the employee’s work is characterized by sustained exemplary accomplishments at the highest level throughout the evaluation period; providing exemplary support to the contributions of the organization. Performance consistently exceeds and sometimes far exceeds the performance goals of the job. Typically demonstrates full mastery of the knowledge, skills and abilities for the required work.

“Achieved”

The employee’s performance consistently met expectations in all essential areas of responsibility, at times possibly exceeding expectations, and the quality of work overall was very good. The most critical annual goals were met. Typically demonstrates proficient knowledge, skills and abilities for the required work.

“Not Achieved”

The employee’s performance did not consistently meet expectations and failed to meet expectations in one or more essential areas of responsibility, and/or one or more of the most critical goals were not met. The employee’s work failed to meet the goals of the job function and generally falls short of performance goals; even though sometimes approaching goals. The employee provides minimal support to the contributions of the organization.

E. Create a Culture of Continuous Feedback

Even though the performance management process only requires one formal coaching session during the annual cycle, feedback should be continuous and ongoing. Fast feedback is positive or constructive criticism that is provided to the employee immediately after the employee performs exceptionally well or below expectations. Fast feedback will have the most impact on employee behavior and performance. An employee’s performance should be routinely incorporated into regularly scheduled one-on-one meetings between the manager and employee.
A performance plan is a living document and can be adjusted throughout the performance management cycle to address changing department and college goals.

**F. Build ‘Capacity to Perform’ Development Plans For Employees**

Developing the capacity to perform includes training, assignments introducing new skills, competencies or higher levels of responsibility and other methods. Managers and employees should collaborate to create ideas and draft a development plan together. This collaboration between the manager and employee will help to capture the employee’s strengths and identify development opportunities. Providing employees with developmental opportunities boosts employee performance, reinforces job-related skills and competencies, and helps employees anticipate and embrace changes in the workplace. Identify specific ways you can support the employee including the resources needed (i.e., on-going feedback, developmental projects, mentoring, training, and new assignments).

Discuss your employee’s career aspirations. Whether the employee wants to grow in their current role or move into another role in the future, you can help them identify the knowledge, skills and experience needed for their career growth. Help your employee establish realistic development goals that are aligned with unit/department and college needs; development should benefit both the organization and the individual.

The development plan that is created should be able to be reasonably completed by the employee and align with the responsibilities included in the employee’s position description. The plan should challenge the employee to perform at their best, while not being unattainable because of complex measurements or ambiguous language.

Provide feedback, coaching, and support regularly not only to proactively address issues, but also to encourage successful competence and confidence in their development. Professional development goals on an employee’s development plan should not overlap into performance plans; however, they should be complimentary.
• **Performance plan objectives** document business results you are expected to achieve in a given year, i.e. Decrease cost per unit by 10% by examining areas where cuts can be made or shifted by the end of this fiscal year.

• **Development goals** support increased effectiveness in the employee’s current role and prepares them for future roles, i.e. Attend quarterly vendor conferences to broaden customer network.

IV. **Completing the Performance Management Form**

The performance management form is designed to capture the complete performance management process on one document. The use of electronic signatures is permitted on this document. At the end of the performance management cycle, the completed form must be submitted to your designated human resource professional.

V. **Utilize your EHE HR Team**

Your EHE HR team consists of HR professionals who have a robust expertise and knowledge on Performance Management philosophies and processes. Please do not hesitate to reach out to any member of the EHE HR team for assistance on any part of the performance management process.

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