Performance Evaluation Manual for Supervisors

Classified Staff Performance Evaluation Program

May 2011
# Performance Evaluation Manual for Supervisors

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SECTION I – INTRODUCTION

Purpose of this Manual

The purpose of this manual is to provide a reference guide on performance evaluations for supervisors.

As a reference, this manual is intended to serve as a training aid for supervisors and as a management resource in their evaluation of personnel. As such, the manual contains a summary of the performance evaluation process.

The approach to performance evaluation described in this manual will assist supervisors in evaluating the performance of their employees by providing both with specific performance objectives and standards. These objectives and standards will ensure that all employees are aware of the performance standards which apply to each of their jobs. Moreover, specific performance factors and values make the performance evaluation process itself easier since supervisors know in advance how the values will be applied.

Purposes of Western’s Performance Evaluation System

1. To comply with bargaining unit contracts (PTE excluded). Employees will receive at least one review during probation or trial service and annually thereafter.

2. To enhance overall job performance with subsequent improvement of unit and institutional effectiveness.

3. To encourage employees to identify issues of concern, put forth new ideas, and assist in goal setting for themselves, the unit, and the institution.

4. To ensure regular open communication between supervisors and employees regarding jobs, expectations, performance objectives, performance standards and personal goals.

Advantages of Performance Evaluation

1. Provides the opportunity to define the job so that both the supervisor and the employee have the same understanding of what is to be done. This includes establishing the expectations of how it is to be done, as well as developing the standards which will be used in the formal evaluation process to apply the pertinent ratings.

2. Provides the opportunity to review the period of evaluation and to discuss both negative and positive aspects of employee performance and to acknowledge meritorious performance.
3. Provides the opportunity to redefine the requirements for the next evaluation period, as necessary.

4. Permits the supervisor and the employee to discuss upward mobility and/or identify training needs.

A good evaluation form is not enough to accomplish the results listed above. A quality performance evaluation places significant responsibility upon the supervisor. Evaluation requires continuous observation, analysis of employee actions, and first-hand knowledge of the employee and his/her work habits. Performance evaluation is not a once-a-year activity. It must be viewed as a continuous process with frequent feedback and observation, all culminating in the formal performance review. A good evaluation process assures that there are no surprises during the formal review session.

SECTION II – THE EVALUATION PROCESS

Method of Evaluation

1. Employee performance is rated for each “performance factor” on the approved form on the basis of performance expectations determined by the supervisor.

2. Upon appointment, the employee’s supervisor will provide the employee with a copy of the job description describing the qualifications, essential functions, duties and responsibilities of the position.

3. Performance expectations for each of the performance factors should be provided to the employee to allow the employee to meet the work expectations after appointment or assignment to a newly created or significantly modified position.

The supervisor’s performance expectations shall remain in effect for future evaluations unless action is taken to modify them and the employee has been provided with a copy of them.

Who Will Do the Evaluating?

The immediate supervisor rates the performance of his/her subordinates. Input from peers and subordinates may be used and evaluation methods may vary, but it should be understood that the supervisor’s rating is the rating which will be used.

On some factors, when it is not possible to actually evaluate the performance, supervisors are encouraged to state that they have not had the opportunity to observe this factor rather than rate without information.
Frequency of Formal Evaluations

Informal performance evaluations occur on an almost daily basis for most employees. Every time a supervisor communicates with an employee regarding his/her work, an informal evaluation has occurred. It’s important for supervisors to document informal evaluations to assist them in producing the formal evaluation (see Record Keeping – Performance “Log” below).

Formal evaluations refer to those times when a written performance evaluation is produced and reviewed with the employee. Formal reviews should occur at least annually.

A performance evaluation must be completed and the form submitted to Human Resources for placement in the employee’s Personnel file. A copy should also be provided to the employee.

Supervisors are expected to be aware of their employee(s) who are due for evaluation. Human Resources will send reminders as needed.

Establishing Performance Objectives and Evaluation Standards/Rating Values

First, the supervisor should make sure that the employee has an accurate understanding of the manner in which the evaluation process and rating system works by having them review the Performance Evaluation Guide for Classified Staff Employees. With this understanding established, the supervisor and employee should meet at the beginning of the performance evaluation review period to define the duties, discuss required employee contributions to goals and objectives, and develop the performance objectives and agreed upon standards.

Good performance objectives are Specific, Pertinent, Attainable, Measurable, and Observable.

1. **Specific** – The objectives spell out in detail what is expected and how and when accomplishments are to be achieved. Changes and/or required improvements should be addressed and the expected standard of performance should be put in writing.

2. **Pertinent** – The objective should be clearly related to job performance. It should be seen as important and relevant in the eyes of both the supervisor and the subordinate, and it should allow both the supervisor and the subordinate to focus their attention on the issues of greatest importance.

3. **Attainable** – Objectives should be realistic; that is, it should be possible to perform at the standard spelled out under “Specific” above. Obviously, resources and support to reach objectives must be provided.

4. **Measurable** – Measures usually involve elements such as quantity, quality, time, etc.
5. **Observable** – Objectives should be written in such a manner that the supervisor will be able to see performance and the results.

*Developing Evaluation Standards*

Rating values (Unsatisfactory through Outstanding) are defined at the bottom of the evaluation form. The following performance factors are listed:

1. Quality of Work
2. Quantity of Work
3. Job Knowledge
4. Working Relationships
5. Supervisory Skills
6. Optional Factor (space on back of form)

Take each of the performance objectives established for the job and classify it under one or more of the performance factors listed above. If a particular objective doesn’t fit under one of the factors, list it under the Optional Factor on the back side of the form. (See Appendix A)

*Developing Rating Values*

Once the objectives have been classified under the performance factors, it is necessary for the supervisor and employee to discuss rating values. This identifies exactly what is required to attain each value. The supervisor should be very specific as to how the values will be applied, so the employee will understand subsequent ratings. (See Appendix A)

*Record Keeping – Performance “Log”*

In order to improve the quality and quantity of the information being used to rate and to ensure that the performance evaluation covers the entire evaluation period, supervisors should maintain performance logs on employees. These logs should include information indicating tasks or projects performed particularly well and also examples demonstrating performance deficiencies.

*Rating Errors — Some cautions and points to consider in the evaluation process.*

A rating error is any attitude, tendency to respond in a certain way, or inconsistency on the part of the supervisor which impedes objectivity and accuracy in the evaluation process. Psychological research indicates that the following types of errors are the most common:
A. Halo/Horns Effect

The Halo effect is the tendency to generalize from one specific positive employee trait to other aspects of the individual’s performance. For instance, a person who is always willing to help other workers may receive inappropriately high ratings on other related job factors. The Halo effect tends to blind the supervisor to shortcomings in the person being evaluated.

The Horns effect, on the other hand, occurs when a particular negative trait or behavior blinds the supervisor to strengths of the individual being evaluated. An example here might be a case where a person who consistently argues with the supervisor over job assignments is rated down on all job factors because of his/her argumentative nature.

The following suggestions can increase objectivity and help prevent this kind of error:

- Consider whether the person being evaluated has done anything unusually good or bad in the last few months. Either situation can color your thinking.
- Ask yourself whether you feel the person has a particularly pleasant or unpleasant personality and whether this might be influencing your opinions regarding their job performance.
- Make certain that you are familiar with the job factors being rated – how they differ from one another and why they are important.
- Maintain a performance log.

B. Central Tendency Bias and Leniency Errors

Central Tendency Bias errors occur when the supervisor does not use either the high or low end of the performance evaluation scale. This means that most, if not all, the ratings end up falling in middle of the scale. If over 90 percent of the ratings are in the middle category, it is likely that this type of error has occurred.

Positive and Negative Leniency refers to the frame of reference used when rating. Positive Leniency is the tendency to be an “easy grader” and is demonstrated by giving too many high ratings. If more than 20 percent of your ratings are in the top two rating categories (“exceeds expectations” and “outstanding”), you may be rating too easily. Negative Leniency is the opposite and results in a disproportionate number of low ratings. If more than 20 percent of your ratings are in the bottom two rating categories (“needs improvement” and “unsatisfactory”), you may be rating too harshly.

Some ways to reduce Central Tendency Bias and Leniency Errors include:

- In cases where you have given an employee a “satisfactory” rating, make certain that you are rating on the basis of knowledge concerning the individual’s performance.
- Remember that most employees either “exceed expectations” or “need improvement” in at least a few job factors. Keep in mind that few employees are “outstanding” or “unsatisfactory” at everything.
• Compare your distribution of ratings with that of other supervisors in your unit. If your ratings are consistently higher or lower than theirs, you may be rating inaccurately.

C. Similar to Me and Contrast Errors

The Similar to Me and Contrast Errors refer to the tendency to give slightly higher ratings to people who are similar to yourself and slightly lower ratings to people who are very unlike you. Similar to Me errors are most likely to occur in a situation where obvious similarities exist between supervisor and the employee. If you find your rating in terms of any kind of stereotype such as “college educated people are brighter than those without degrees…” or “people who enjoy the outdoors are better adjusted…” then you are probably making this kind of error.

Contrast errors take several different forms. One is the reverse of the Similar to Me error described above. In this type of situation, the supervisor rates employees who differ from himself/herself lower than they should be rated simply because they are different in terms of attitude, sex, ethnic background, education, etc. If you find yourself rating in terms of any kind of stereotype such as “women tend to be…” or “Asian Americans usually are…” then you are probably making this kind of error.

Another form of Contrast error occurs when you rate employees relative to each other rather than on the basis of individual performance. Take a case where two employees, John and May, are both “outstanding” in their report writing skills, but May is perceived to be better than John. An example of Contrast error would be to lower John’s rating to the next lower value to reflect the differences in his performance relative to May’s rather than to go ahead and give him “outstanding” as his individual performance deserves.

To reduce Similar to Me Contrast errors:

• Avoid categorizing people. Make sure you are rating one employee’s performance and not responding to a stereotype you hold for a whole class of people.
• Resist the urge to change ratings on the employee due to the ratings you gave another employee on a subsequent evaluation. Remember, you should be rating employees against fixed standards—not against each other.
• Study the ratings you have given to determine whether you have given higher ratings to individuals more similar to yourself. Be particularly alert for this problem when rating an employee who is a good friend or with whom you socialize.
• Also, study your ratings to see if you are giving lower ratings to employees who are very dissimilar to you or whom you dislike.
**Planning and Conducting the Performance Evaluation Review Session**

Even the best designed performance evaluation system cannot quiet the fear that most people have about being evaluated. Since the objective of most of the performance evaluation review session is communication, it is important to plan and conduct the session with great care.

For purposes of planning for the performance evaluation review session, the session itself can be conceived as having six parts:

1. **Review session preparation**
2. **Setting a positive tone**
3. **Outlining the review session**
4. **Review session communication**
5. **Planning for the future**
6. **Closing the review session**

1. **Review Session Preparation**

Review session preparation refers to the “homework” the supervisor must do before the review session.

   a. Review the performance objectives and standards
   b. Study the information recorded in the performance log
   c. Examine the various performance factors
   d. Apply the rating values as originally developed to each factor

Set a definite date, time, and place for the review session with the employee several days in advance. When setting the review session appointment, provide the employee with a copy of the objectives, standards, and rating values originally developed with the employee. It is often helpful to have your employees rate themselves on their own performance.

2. **Setting a Positive Tone**

This deals with those verbal and nonverbal interactions which occur during the first few minutes (even the first few seconds) of a review session. Research has shown that the first five minutes of a review session often set the tone for the entire session—discomfort created early may be impossible to overcome during the session.

It is particularly important to put the employee at ease. One of the most effective ways to accomplish this is to briefly review with the employee the evaluation system and the purpose of the review session. Each employee should be told that all employees are subject to evaluation on an annual basis.

The review session will get off to a good start if you:
3. **Outlining the Review Session**

Let the employee know what will happen in the review:

- Outline the review session and the actual events that will occur during the session.
- Discuss the objectives of the review session. Usually, the objectives include one or more of the following: (1) specific feedback on performance, (2) discussion of general issues or concerns about job performance, (3) discussion of opportunities for growth or improvement, and (4) formulation of an employee development plan.
- Note the time periods under consideration; for example, you might be reviewing performance for the last six months and setting performance objectives for the coming six months.

You may find it helpful to prepare, in advance, a written outline of the points you want to cover during the review session.

4. **Review Session Communication**

The review session provides the opportunity for open communication between supervisors and employees. As much as 70 percent of the meaning in the communication process is imparted by means other than word choice. Voice pitch, volume, stress on certain words, body posture, and facial expressions supplement (or even change) the meaning of the words used.

There are some specific skills that can be developed through practice to improve the quality of communication. These skills include attending, facilitating, paraphrasing, clarifying, and feedback. Each skill is discussed below.

a. **Attending**: This skill refers to behaviors that show the employee that you are listening to what he or she is saying. Some things you can do to show that you are attending include:
- Maintain eye contact. Look directly at the employee when you are speaking and when you are listening.
- Maintain a relaxed posture. This can convey to the employee that you are comfortable.
- Make verbal statements that “follow” what the employee has said. In other words, your statements should be consistent with the topic that he/she is discussing. For example, if the employee is talking about the desire to attend a particular training session, you should not ignore this point and jump to the employee’s unwillingness to work with Joe Smith.
- Try not to interrupt the employee.
- Throw the ball to the employee and ask how he/she feels things are going on the job. Then listen.

b. **Facilitating**: This skill includes behaviors designed to make communication flow more smoothly. By facilitating, you are helping the employee say more about a particular topic, to give more specific examples, and so on. Some things you can do to facilitate:

- Make specific verbal invitations that encourage the employee to state a position or to explore further a stated position. Some facilitating expressions might be:
  
  “I’d like to hear more about that.”
  “Can you give me an example?”
  “Can you give me more detail?”
  “Do you see any problems we should discuss?”
  “Do you have any suggestions for improving the way we are operating?”

- Make specific nonverbal invitations to encourage the employee to talk, such as:
  
  - Head nods
  - Eye contact
  - Leaning forward
  - Narrowing physical distance; for example, moving closer together.

It is inappropriate to argue or state strongly your own position at this time. Doing so will disrupt, if not cripple, the communication process. If the employee does express some concerns or does raise some areas which you may agree with or disagree with, it is a good idea to take notes during the review session so that you will be sure to return to these points later in the review session.

c. **Paraphrasing**: This communication skill involves brief restatement by the supervisor of some prior verbal communication made by the employee. The restatement communicates the same meaning in fewer words. By paraphrasing, you accomplish a number of things:
The employee is assured that you are listening and following thoughts and feelings.

The employee’s thoughts are condensed or presented in a more concise way.

The employee is able to determine that you understand what he/she has said.

d. Clarifying: During the review session, it is likely that the employee will express some incomplete thoughts, have difficulty expressing some thoughts, will say things you don’t understand, or will simply lose you. Offer specific invitations for the employee to clarify his/her statements:

“I’m confused.”
“Can you give me an example?”
“I lost you there.”
“I need more information about that.”

It is important to note the emphasis here upon “I” statements as opposed to “You” statements. Saying “I’m confused” has a more positive effect on your subordinate than “You’re confusing me.”

e. Provide Feedback: Feedback refers to specific information you share with the employee concerning your observation of his/her performance during the review period. As you give feedback, be sure to:

- Identify specific critical incidents. Indicate what happened, when it happened, where it happened, and how often it happened.
- Address previously agreed upon objectives.
- Focus on important job dimensions. Don’t deal with infractions of little cognizance. The time to discuss those problems is when they occur. Discuss them at that time—then forget them.
- Give recognition for performance which you would like to see continued.
- Check and clarify to ensure clear communication is understood by both employee and supervisor.

5. Planning for the Future

Once the employee’s past performance has been discussed, the focus should shift to the future. What will or can be done to maintain or to improve performance in the next review period? Performance improvement is likely to occur only if specific plans are developed and specific performance objectives are set. You may wish to ask the employee to develop a plan for achieving the desired performance objectives.

6. Closing the Review Session

The review session can be considered finished only when the following areas have been discussed:
a. Past Performance

- Did he/she perform the duties and achieve the performance objectives?
- How well did he/she perform in meeting performance factors?
- How well did he/she rate?

b. Future Performance

- What are the duties and performance objectives for the next performance period?
- Which are the most important?
- What standards and rating values will be used to rate the employee’s performance?
- What specific goals will the employee strive to achieve?

c. Areas of Agreement

- If performance has met standards, what will be done to maintain that level of performance?
- If performance has not been acceptable, what will be done to improve performance? When?
- If further employee development is an objective, what will be done to ensure this development? Who will do it? When?

d. Areas of Disagreement

- How will these be resolved?

Many supervisors have found that it is best to have the employee summarize the points listed above since it is all too easy for the boss to summarize with the employee nodding his or her head in agreement and then leaving with a clear understanding of what was discussed and agreed upon.

Performance Evaluation Checklist

Supervisors can use this checklist to ensure that the required steps are taken:

1. At the beginning of the performance evaluation review period:

   - Make sure that the employee understands how the evaluation process and rating system works by having them review the Performance Evaluation Guide for Classified Staff Employees.
   - Define the duties, discuss required employee contributions to goals and objectives, and develop performance objectives and standards.
   - Develop rating values.
• Provide the employee with a copy of the job description, and written performance expectations for that factor.

2. During the Evaluation Period:

• Observe employee performance.
• Maintain log of examples of good and bad performance.
• Communicate on a continuing basis through informal evaluation.
• Monitor progress toward performance objectives and performance goals.

3. Before the Review Session:

• Set appointment with the employee several days in advance.
• Ask employee to rate self and provide form.
• Review log and other notes related to employee performance.
• Review prior employee performance objectives.
• Rate employee on all applicable factors.
• Arrange a private setting.
• Prepare preliminary employee performance objectives for the next review period.
• Plan for specific corrective and/or developmental actions.

4. During the Actual Review Session:

• Be businesslike but be pleasant and informal.
• Involve employee and solicit employee comments. Encourage discussion.
• Finalize performance objectives for the next review period.
• Establish a clear understanding of standards and rating values.
• Close on a positive note.

5. Preparing for the Next Evaluation Review Period:

• Ensure that the job description accurately describes the employee’s job duties. If an employee’s job description needs to be updated, work with HR to ensure that all revisions remain within the job specifications for the position.
• Follow up to ensure that approved training/professional development is being pursued by the employee.
**APPENDIX A - Samples of Performance Objectives and Standards**

**Secretary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Outstanding</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provides all typing services for the unit.</td>
<td>Typing speed exceeds 70 wpm. Consistently produces work which is neat and error free. Finishes assignments prior to deadline.</td>
<td>Typing speed within range of 50-59 wpm. Work contains neatly made corrections. Work produced is accurate. Produces typing assignments on time.</td>
<td>Typing speed is 40 wpm or less. Unreliable insofar as typing errors are concerned and work must be proofed by others. Work contains obvious corrections. Unable to do other than routine typing assignments. Typing assignments frequently late.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transcribes all dictation for the unit.</td>
<td>Transcribes dictated material with accuracy and at speed of 65 wpm. Corrects grammar while typing from dictation. Returns typed material in finalized form.</td>
<td>Transcribes dictated material accurately at speed in excess of 50 wpm. Completes transcription of dictated material promptly.</td>
<td>Transcribes drafts at a maximum speed of 45 wpm. Fails to transcribe dictated material by required time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides “first person” telephone and reception duties.</td>
<td>Fields the widest range of calls. Answers technical related questions correctly. Always answers telephone and “in person” inquiries in pleasant, courteous, and helpful manner.</td>
<td>Courteous telephone and “in person” responses. Correct transmittal of messages. Accurate referrals to other WWU agencies. Routinely helps callers on a majority of questions.</td>
<td>Gives rude and/or discourteous “over the telephone” or “in person” client responses. Inability to transfer calls. Failure to communicate messages to recipients.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria</td>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain filing and retrieval system for departmental letters, documents and Reference Station materials.</td>
<td>Establishes filing and cross-reference system from which materials are readily retrievable. Purges files annually.</td>
<td>Filing kept up-to-date. Filed materials easily retrieved. Reference Station kept current.</td>
<td>Filing permitted to accumulate more than two weeks. Copies misplaced prior to being filed. Materials filed incorrectly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is punctual and dependable.</td>
<td>Is consistently available to assist in emergency situations. Except for rare occasions, always punctual. Always attempts to let supervisor know when necessary to be away from office. Completes assigned tasks with very little supervision.</td>
<td>Frequently late for work (two or more times per week). Abuses coffee break (two or more times per week). Fails to carry out assigned tasks without supervision. Neglects to phone office when ill.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Routinely performs miscellaneous office duties, including: 1. Opens and distributes mail. 2. Maintains vacation/sick leave cards. 3. Maintains Reference Station. 4. Shares copy machine maintenance with other users. 5. Orders supplies and equipment. 6. Prepares Purchase Requisitions and Travel Vouchers.</td>
<td>Can be relied on to perform miscellaneous routine duties without reminders or supervision.</td>
<td>Needs only occasional reminder by supervisor regarding completion of routine duties. Requires constant monitoring by supervisor to assure that routine duties are being completed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handles a range of confidential matters with discretion.</td>
<td>Is given access to full range of confidential matters without any unauthorized disclosures.</td>
<td>Can be relied upon to handle a range of “normal” confidential matters without unauthorized disclosure.</td>
<td>On unauthorized basis, provides or tells confidential matters to others, resulting in hurt to affected action.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## DEFINITIONS OF PERFORMANCE RATING CATEGORIES

**OUTSTANDING** - The employee has exceeded all of the performance expectations for this factor and has made many significant contributions to the efficiency and economy of this organization through such performance.

**EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS** - The employee regularly works beyond a majority of the performance expectations of this factor and has made significant contributions to the efficiency and economy of this organization through such performance.

**MEETS EXPECTATIONS** - The employee has met the performance expectations for this factor and has contributed to the efficiency and economy of this organization through such performance.

**NEEDS IMPROVEMENT** - The employee has failed to meet one or more of the significant performance expectations for this factor.

**UNSATISFACTORY** - The employee has failed to meet the performance expectations for this factor.

* Give specific examples of this employee’s performance
7. **Specific Achievements** (Use additional sheets if necessary)

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8. **Performance Goals for the Next Evaluation Period**

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9. **Training and Development Suggestions**

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10. **Attendance** (Supervisor’s Comments)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supervisor’s Name (Print or Type)</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Signature*</th>
<th>Date Rated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

*Employee’s Comments*

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This performance evaluation was discussed with me on the date noted above. I understand that my signature attests only that a personal review session was held with me; it does not necessarily indicate that I agree with the evaluation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employee’s Signature</th>
<th>Date Signed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

*Department Head’s Comments*

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name (Print or Type)</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Signature*</th>
<th>Date Reviewed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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*Upon completion of all signatures, provide a copy of this review to employee. Forward original to Personnel file located in Human Resources.*

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